



ESSAYS AND LETTERS
OF
OLIVER GOLDSMITH
VOLUME I



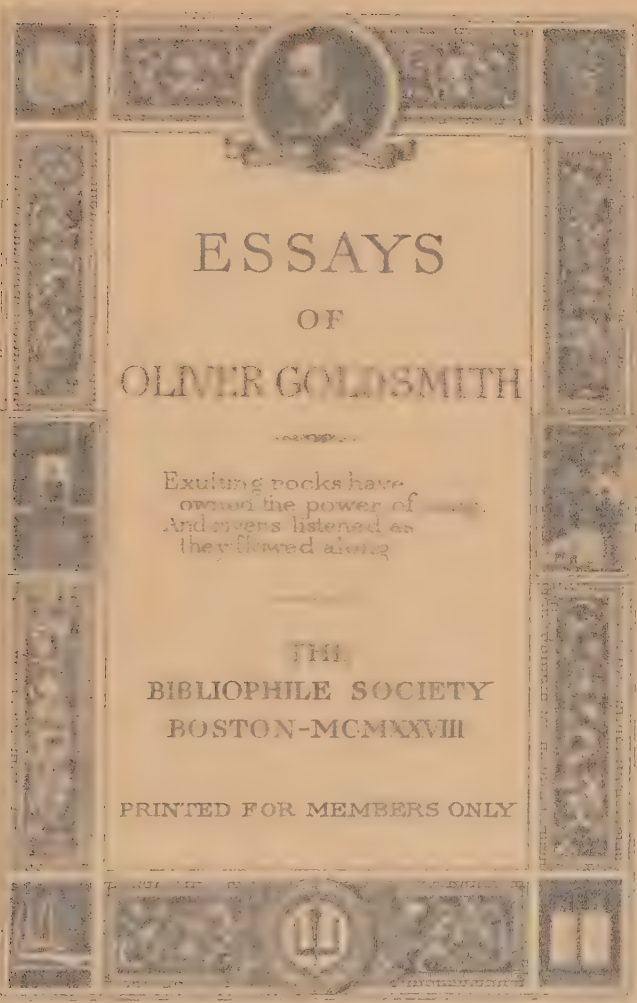


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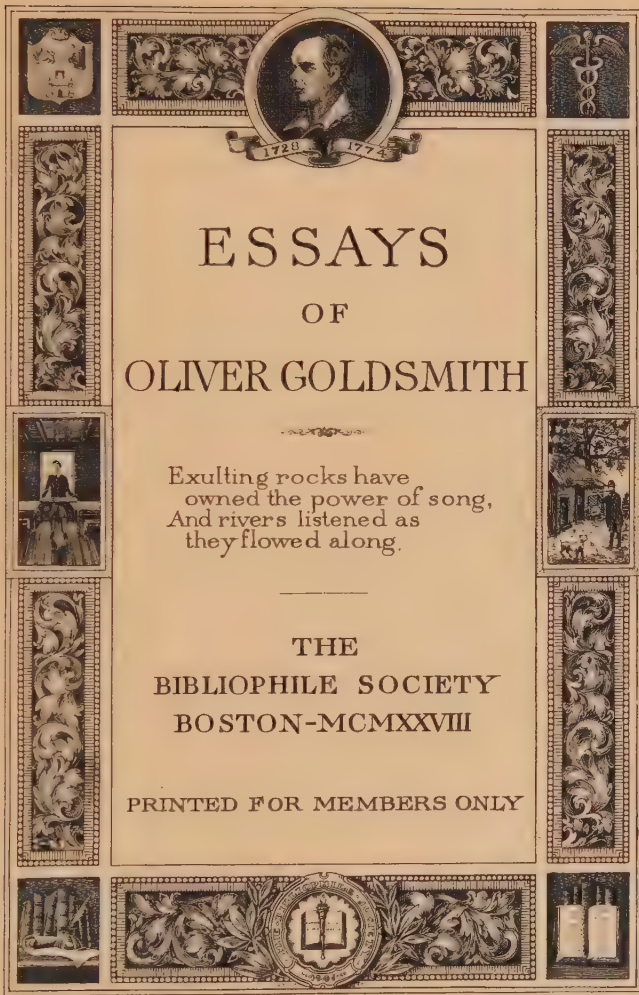
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And rivers listened as
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THE
BIBLIOPHILE SOCIETY
BOSTON-MCMXXVIII

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OLIVER GOLDSMITH

BY HENRY HOWARD HARPER

Some wiseacre is said to have observed that the two divinities who preside over poetry and prose are not congenial helpmates; that, singly, they can be most eloquent and agreeable, but, like a mismatched couple, when they set up housekeeping together they rasp on each other's sensibilities and quarrel at the expense of their own happiness. Oliver Goldsmith was one of those unusual persons in whom the tutelar divinities of poetry and prose were happily united; and by a mutual exchange of talents and other good offices, each contributed lustre to the performances of the other. Which calls to mind the two ancient playwrights, Johnson and Jacob, who achieved a great reputation for themselves, largely because of their astuteness in discovering and applauding each other's merits.

Goldsmith presents, moreover, one of those rare instances where an author has with peculiar felicity utilized a rich and varied store of personal experience without obtruding himself into the picture; therefore some knowledge of his life gives an added relish to his works. Much of his best

prose is a good-humored commentary upon himself and his peculiar experiences, seasoned with enough imaginative romance to supply piquancy and relieve commonplaceness; and thus while none of his writings assume the verity of human documents, in many cases the characters and settings are so thinly veiled that the reader who is acquainted with Goldsmith's life may easily recognize the author himself behind the disguise. The same is true of his poetry, which is for the most part a picture in rhyme of human life and human emotions, drawn with skilful imagery, graceful expression and picturesque description. The scenes, filled with variety and action, are depicted with a vividness and charm such as are to be found in the exquisite colorings of a masterly painting.

Goldsmith's lifelong proneness to indiscretion and social blunders, coupled with his other handicaps, made up a life replete with adventure, hardship and humiliation; but he paid the penalties without complaint, and with hearty good nature he laughed at the world, and especially at himself — "the most ridiculous object in it," according to his own account. With a facile pen he turned the most distressing episodes into readable comedy, the worst of his follies into valuable precepts, and in his poetry he mellowed the whole into pleasing, inspiring harmony. His life was

totally unlike his writings in this one particular, that from beginning to end it was a potpourri of misadventure, maladministration and discouragement, while his writings, brimful of common sense, cheerfulness and useful maxims, are at once the delight and admiration of people whose lives are regulated with the strictest consistency.

In writing anything about Goldsmith we are reminded of what he said in prefacing the biography of a famous man, viz., "We are fond of talking of those who have given us pleasure; not that we have anything new or important to say, but because the subject is pleasing." But in the case of Goldsmith the novelty and the lure of his life are so manifold that biographers seem never to exhaust the points of interest. Prior wrote a ponderous biography of him, and was followed by the famous biographer, John Forster, who gave a voluminous compilation of excerpts and comments, throwing many new and interesting sidelights upon the history of his subject. Washington Irving later composed a delightful compendium, viewing our author from varied angles; and still we find that the interesting facts about the man and his life are far from being exhausted. The several biographers and commentators have indulged in copious observations, both pro and con, concerning Goldsmith's parentage, his education, his indolence, his hardships, and his sudden

rise to fame, along with many supplementary hints and conjectures; but upon two essential points all opinions converge in harmonious accord: though one of the homeliest, he was one of the kindest hearted geniuses that ever lived; and he was one of the most unaffected, the most lovable, the most genial, the most entertaining literary artists in history. Even the splenetic Doctor Johnson was moved to exclaim of him — “What such an author has told, who would undertake to tell again! . . . Whether we take Goldsmith as a poet, as a comic writer, or as an historian, he stands in the first class. . . . He was a man of variety of powers, and such felicity of performance that he always seemed to do best that which he was doing; a man who had the art of being minute without tediousness, and general without confusion; whose language was copious without exuberance, exact without constraint, and easy without weakness.”

The physiognomy of Goldsmith alone is interesting, in that it controverts the notion of some theorists that Nature is an invariably kind and impartial mother. In the distribution of favors among her miscellaneous infantile brood she appears to have played a whimsical joke on little Oliver, whose grotesque features and misshapen, undersized physique indicated that he had been singled out either as the victim of her facetiousness or else the special object of her wanton con-

tempt. The gentle Clotho, whose function is to preside at the birth, is said to have burst into laughter, then into tears, at first sight of him.

It sometimes happens that in a brood of chickens there is one hard-favored member that has the misfortune to have its feathers grow out at a reversed angle, so that by means of being slanted the wrong way this anomalous plumage instead of ornamenting and protecting the body, serves only to make it hideous. One inconvenience of this deformity is, that the unhappy chick is looked upon as an exotic monstrosity by all the barnyard fowl; its company is shunned as much as possible, and its companions lose no opportunity of testifying their contempt by pestering it and making its life both wretched and isolated. Such an unfortunate victim of Nature's whim, or dislike, was Oliver Goldsmith. At school he was buffeted and jeered by his mates because of his awkward, ugly appearance, and he was generously flogged by his instructors because he was regarded as a hopeless blockhead, devoid of ambition, and incapable of acquiring either manners or instruction. His frail physique rendered him particularly vulnerable to the displeasure of irate schoolmasters, who in those days were wont to display their prowess in an exemplary manner on certain of their pupils as a means of infusing both awe and admiration into the others, much the

same as pugilists use punching bags for practice, and to set off their fistic talents before audiences.

It was the contention of one orthodox school-master of more recent times, that all boys are possessed of one or more devils, and he boasted that the pupils he had flogged the hardest were the most immune from this contamination. It was also the tart observation of one who attended his school that, strangely enough, the scholars who seemed invested with the most obstinate devils were always the puniest ones, who were as powerless to resist the invasions of the devil as they were to defend themselves against the attacks of his emissary. And so it was with young Goldsmith, who later in life rose to remark that "there is a frailty attending human nature, that few masters are able to keep their temper whilst they correct."

When Nature had well-nigh depleted her resources in the disfigurement of Goldsmith's face, the inflexible goddess Atropos, or else some other ill-natured deity, took up the cue and continued the caricature almost to the point of tragedy, by inflicting him in his early boyhood with a hard attack of smallpox, which left his visage so scarred and unsightly that he much resembled a masked character in a burlesque performance. This may account for his reputed fondness for masquerades.

As the meanest spirits sometimes find lodgment

in the most beautiful earthly forms, so conversely, the most noble or talented spirits oftentimes dwell in unattractive bodies; and to atone for the deficiency of an uncomely exterior, certain persons, notably Goldsmith, have been proportionately gifted in other ways. It would therefore appear that in like measure as Nature and Dame Fortune combined to heap their savage disdain upon this ill-favored child, the Muse extended her kindly protectorate over him; and although he was for many years heedlessly insensible to her benign patronage, at length when he caught the cadence of her resistless voice he translated it to the world in a language of unaffected artistry that will go down through endless generations. While the Muse is charged with being a shy and fickle goddess, she is known for her whimsicality in selecting as the objects of her greatest devotion and constancy those upon whom Fortune has cast her darkest frown; indeed she might well be called poverty's most eloquent disciple. But while she seldom endows her votaries with worldly affluence, she at least employs them as the means of enriching the world at large; and to this useful end she generously endowed the unpromising Goldsmith, who after finding himself unfitted for the medical, the legal, or the religious profession, responded at length to her persistent call. In the "Deserted Village" he thus addressed her: —

"Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried, —
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride;
Thou source of all my bliss and all my woe,
Thou found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so."

His genius was of that order which is defined as "an exalted intellectual power capable of operating independently of tuition and training." As a diamond-cutter, by means of his peculiar skill with certain tools, converts a crude looking piece of material into a gem of dazzling beauty, Goldsmith, by means of an inspired pen, evolved the most scintillating thoughts from colorless or uninviting situations. And as there is in all history scarcely a figure who has won a warmer place in the hearts of mankind, so there is hardly to be found one of wide renown who, from the beginning to the close of his life, labored under more conspicuous handicaps.

It was Goldsmith's misfortune to live always in the shadow of some unyielding barrier to happiness, which, though always in sight, was never within reach: —

"But me, not destined such delights to share, —
My prime of life in wandering spent and care;
Impell'd, with steps unceasing, to pursue
Some fleeting good that mocks me with the view;
That, like the circle bounding earth and skies,
Allures from far, yet as I follow, flies;
My fortune leads to traverse realms alone,
And find no spot of all the world my own."

After working his way in and out of three universities (Dublin, Edinburgh and Leyden) and trying his hand at as many different professions, without gaining distinction in any of them, he became afflicted with wanderlust and straggled through Europe in the capacity of a common vagabond, subsisting mostly by fluting and singing in the streets and at public inns. Once he was thrown into prison, but managed finally to gain his release through his respectable family connections. For years, even while pursuing his studies, his indolent, erratic, roving disposition kept him on the verge of starvation.

Arriving at length in Dover, he found that his trusty flute and his lusty voice which had served him so well on the Continent, were no longer of any use to him; the phlegmatic Englishman was not to be captivated by any such musical flummery. His abilities therefore, such as he relied upon for a living, were held in the highest contempt, and a reincarnated Homer would scarcely have fared any better than he; for in England the talents of a poor wandering minstrel — even an educated one — were but little more in demand than those of a highwayman; indeed the two professions were about on a parity. Nor could Goldsmith's degree of Doctor of Medicine gain him employment even in handling a pestle and mortar in a country apothecary shop. Wherefore he was

compelled to resort to all sorts of desperate expedients, including the meanest drudgery, to keep from starving.

In some way he managed to reach London, where for a time he wandered about the streets, friendless and penniless; finding lodgment at night wherever he could burrow in, hidden from the eyes of the police, and protected from the inclemency of the February weather. In this way he picked up an acquaintance with many vagrants, beggars, street-walkers, pickpockets and other malcontents with which the English metropolis was infested. Concerning these people and conditions he afterwards wrote, — "Why, why was I born a man, and yet see the suffering wretches I cannot relieve! The world will give you reproaches, but will not give you relief." Houseless and wretched indeed they were; but not more so than our poet who, seemingly unmindful of his own like condition, lamented their distress. "Tenderness, without a capacity of relieving, only makes the man who feels it more wretched than the object which sues for assistance."

When nearly thirty years of age Goldsmith, through the aid of some of his former college mates, secured a menial position with a bookseller, which brought him into an atmosphere where the good fairy god-mother of literature discovered him. But even after rising to fame, his

extravagance and the numerous demands upon him so far outstripped his income that in order to keep up appearances he was obliged to borrow from everyone who would lend to him on his reputation, or the promise of some literary work, till at length, overwhelmed with debts on every side, he died in his forty-sixth year, owing more than two thousand pounds — a large sum in those days.

But every external bitterness seemed only to sweeten Goldsmith's nature within — to increase his benevolent inclinations toward other afflicted ones; in fact one of the many frailties imputed to him was his spontaneous and ungovernable impulse to lessen the misery of others by increasing his own.

“Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And even his failings leaned to Virtue's side.”

Under no circumstances could he refuse to give up his last shilling to any tattered stranger who accosted him with a sad tale of woe; and if he had no money, he gave away his clothes or any article he possessed which could be pawned for a few pence. Though in his writings he persistently inveighed against the harmful effects of indiscriminate almsgiving, the scene of any human distress sent all his stern resolutions to the winds, and his hand went to his pocket — which was

oftentimes empty — as automatically as the eye closes when a cinder flies into it. Once when he could command neither money nor any object of value he was approached by a poor woman with a retinue of beggarly children whose father, it was claimed, had lately been imprisoned for debt; and being unable to withstand the appeal of their miserable plight, he took them to his attic room and stripped his bed of all its coverings, which they carried off to the pawnshop; and that night, to protect himself from the cold, he ripped open the bed-tick and buried himself in the feathers. It happened that early next morning a caller appeared, who on seeing him emerge from his downy lair, with face and body all covered with feathers, instantly surmised that the erratic young poet had gone crazy, whereupon he is said to have wheeled about and fled from the scene.

Washington Irving — who from boyhood was a student and ardent admirer of Goldsmith — after visiting the squalid quarters occupied by the poet during his obscure days at Green Arbor Court, London, wrote the following lively description of the place: "It then existed in its pristine state, and was a small square of tall and miserable houses, the very intestines of which seemed turned inside out, to judge from the old garments and frippery that fluttered from every window. It appeared to be a region of washer-

women, and lines were stretched about the little square, on which clothes were dangling to dry.

"Just as we entered the square, a scuffle took place between two viragoes about a disputed right to a wash-tub, and immediately the whole community was in a hubbub. Heads in mob-caps popped out of every window, and such a clamor of tongues ensued that I was fain to stop my ears. Every Amazon took part with one or other of the disputants, and brandished her arms, dripping with soapsuds, and fired away from her window as from the embrasure of a fortress; while the screams of children nestled and cradled in every procreant chamber of this hive, waking with the noise, set up their shrill pipes to swell the general concert."

Goldsmith's long period of vagabondage and his knowledge of the underworld proved to be a rich literary asset in gaining recognition; also a heavy liability to him later when he became renowned as a writer, and as the friend and companion of Doctor Samuel Johnson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and their select coterie of celebrities. For a man thus to pull himself by his own bootstraps out of the mire of despondency and motley environment and acquire a secure footing among the exclusive intellectual aristocracy of England would test the credulity of a believer in fairy lore. But as the scenes, events, companionships and

habits of Goldsmith's life furnished the inspiration and subject matter for his best writings, some of them also proved to be his greatest stumbling blocks in after life. In other words the same forces that operated to a large extent in rearing him to fame and comparative fortune afterwards contributed frequently to his mortification, and to his ultimate financial ruin — and death.

No sooner had he established himself in comfortable living quarters and in good society, with a growing literary reputation, than the word was passed around among the impecunious rabble with whom he had formerly associated, and he was constantly beset by a motley horde of importunate beggars on one side, while he was harassed on the other by a tribe of envious backbiters who could not endure seeing one of their compeers rise above their station. Furthermore, after his genius had lifted him well toward the topmost rung in the ladder of literary fame, he still bore the deep-seated scars of his hard encounters with poverty and its attendant ills; and the uncouth manners he had acquired from long contact with the vulgar element were a perpetual source of humiliation to him in his new surroundings. His lack of *savoir faire* in the company of people whose deportment and conversations were characterized by all the niceties of English social and intellectual life often brought ridicule and

heartaches upon him. By some he was dubbed the "wild genius," by others the "wild Irishman." If a jest or a pasquinade were perpetrated in any gathering where he was present, he was almost sure to be the buffer. At a large supper-party Miss Reynolds toasted him as the ugliest man she ever knew, and his friend Garrick, the actor, said of him that he wrote like an angel, but talked like a parrot. In the society of well-bred people he was admittedly an awkward performer; but whenever he took up the pen the unfailing Thalia seemed always to be at his elbow to direct it. Had he schooled himself in the art of silent observance, and been content to learn social proprieties from the example of others, he would have been much less exposed to bantering; but he could no more restrain himself from mixing in a heated discussion than a bull terrier could stand by and umpire a free-for-all dog fight.

And as his foppish dress and the burlesque appearance of his features, so appropriately set off by his rustic buffoonery and noisy laughter, were always played upon by the company at the coffee house, the club, and in the drawingroom, these oddities coupled with his mirth-provoking *faux pas* and other transgressions of social decorum, though galling enough to his pride at the time, were afterwards turned to good account by himself in entertaining his readers. Thus his pen

usually belied his feelings, in that his most spirited compositions were wrung from a heart bowed down with a keen sense of shame and regret to which poverty was ever a faithful attendant.

It is indeed surprising that any of the writers of those times could have composed themselves into a frame of mind capable of conceiving anything of a happy nature to write about. Goldsmith, Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, and most, if not all, of the lesser fry were so pinched by penury and harassed by creditors and bailiffs that one is inclined to marvel that any of them could have mustered enough cheerfulness to write in a light-hearted vein. No wonder that all four of these authors went prematurely to the grave. Of those mentioned Sterne alone succeeded in weathering the storms of life till he got past fifty; but finally, involved in debt, he gave up the unequal contest and died in meagre lodgings, with only a hired companion to attend the last rites. The indefatigable Johnson — hardly more favored by fortune than the rest — managed to struggle along till, at the age of fifty-three, the crown awarded him a small pension, on which he subsisted for twenty-two years longer; but in his old age he declared that his health had been such that from his twentieth year he had seldom enjoyed a single day of ease. If in their writings these authors managed to suppress their wretched condition of body and

mind, they were more self-revealing in their personal letters, many of which are either complaints of ill-health, or answers to threatening duns, or else urgent appeals for loans wherewith to keep themselves out of jail; and if they were not actually in the clutches of the jailer they were seldom more than one jump ahead of the sheriff's deputy. Goldsmith thus wrote to a creditor named Griffiths, — "I know of no misery but a jail to which my own imprudences and your letter seem to point. I have seen it inevitable these three or four weeks; and, by heavens! I request it as a favor — a favor that may prevent something more fatal."

One of Goldsmith's many embarrassments was at Northumberland House, where he went to call in obedience to an indirect request of the great Duke, who had admired his writings. Decked out in gay and inappropriate colors, with a new periwig and cane, he said he presented himself and was ushered into the antechamber where he "waited for some time, when a gentleman, very elegantly dressed, made his appearance." Mistaking this person for the Duke, our caller proceeded at once to bestow upon him all the carefully studied compliments he had prepared for the occasion. Just as he was finishing, the Duke himself appeared in the doorway, and in the resultant abashment poor stammering Goldsmith made but an awkward figure in attempting to im-

provide a substitute for the long speech he had wasted on the liveried servant. This, like many another joke or misadventure wherein the laugh was at his expense, was naïvely told by himself.

Unhappily for Goldsmith, he was ever conscious of his shortcomings; and in mixed assemblies, where his bizarre appearance and untutored manners were the occasion of raillery, though like a true sport he joined outwardly in the laughter, his heart was frequently stung to the quick, and he craved the seclusion of his lonely chamber, where he used to retire to brood over his unhappy lot, and give vent to his wounded feelings.

But as the delicate fragrance of a rose is untainted by the decayed substance that nourished it, so it was with Goldsmith's writings — though they were rooted deep in the gloomy recesses of poverty, chagrin and melancholy environment, — though their nourishment was drawn from hard usage and degradation, they were refined by the innate goodness of their author's nature; and flowering luxuriantly in the sunshine they challenged the admiration of the most cultured intellects. They have outstripped other works of greater pretensions by scholars of more profound learning, because they possess in a large degree "that magic charm of style by which works are embalmed into perpetuity."

Like many others, Goldsmith found that fame

has a predisposition to lead its votaries into new and uncongenial associations; and it carries in its wake a cumbersome train of disadvantages. In some ways he was unfortunate in entering the ranks of polite society, and in coming so much in contact with Doctor Samuel Johnson, the towering literary and critical mogul of the age. This brought him under the censorious eye of Boswell, who trailed his great master about with the fawning servility of a poodle, seldom failing to improve an opportunity of venting his jealous spleen upon those whom Johnson deigned occasionally to compliment. There is a species of malignant jealousy which bristles with hostility toward all persons upon whom the object of its devotion bestows any more than common civility; and the favorite weapon of those afflicted with this malady is to accuse others of their own besetting infirmity. In writing the *Life of Johnson*, Boswell sometimes displayed his obtuseness in attempting to detract from Goldsmith's fame by falsely accusing him of jealous instincts; also by making disparaging remarks about him, and taking obvious delight in calling attention to arguments, anecdotes and jokes in which he was worsted; thus reminding us of a tiny star, which attracting no particular notice apart from other stars of its size, sets to spluttering and fussing at the moon, and jeering at it because it occasionally suffers a

momentary eclipse. In which display of petty jealousy it not only calls attention to the greater luminary, but also emphasizes its own comparative minuteness.

In any other intelligent company but that in which Goldsmith's fame invested him, his talents would have been as fully appreciated and his uncourtliness would have been much less conspicuous than it appeared when brought into sharp contrast with the ostentatious learning of Johnson, the polished but caustic pleasantries of Beauclerc, the eloquence and easy complaisance of Burke and other fellow members of the exclusive Literary Club, and the suave gentility of fashionable circles where he had found entrée. In addition to the mortifications his "social errors" cost him he not only lived far beyond his slender means, but was heavily taxed by his liberal benefactions to the numerous beggars and other leeches who hung about his doors.

While the "Great Cham," as Doctor Johnson was sometimes called, was a big-hearted man and a staunch, impartial admirer of genius, he regarded the rest of the literati as his puppets, who breathed and existed under his patronage and by his permission. He *would* have his own say, and his own way; and it was not often that anyone had the hardihood to cross him. Those whom he disliked he ignored and those whom he most ad-

mired he chastised with a sharp tongue, — this being a prerogative which he indulged with a loose rein, and guarded with such jealous care that if anyone presumed to concur by adding one syllable of abuse he would turn on them with all the fury of a wounded lioness in defending her cubs. At the coffee house meetings and other places of rendezvous his delight in lampooning Goldsmith was exceeded only by the warmth with which he defended him when attacked by anyone else.

In his later life many of Goldsmith's friends and associates were happily married, and in good circumstances. Indeed wealth, culture and happiness were all around him — everywhere but within. Though his heart constantly hungered for the society of children and the felicities of wedded life, he never married. For what reason is left wholly to conjecture. He was an ardent admirer of feminine charms, but perhaps the women he could have married, he wouldn't, and those he would have married, he couldn't. He is known to have had several *affaires d'amour*, — perhaps the most prolonged and disappointing was with the beautiful Miss Horneck, more widely famed as the "Jessamy Bride;" but he seems always to have discovered that the ones upon whom he settled his attentions were either already married, or engaged to be married, or else they

had sworn eternal celibacy. He has furnished us with the following jocose narrative of at least one love affair: —

“Disappointed in ambition, I had recourse to love. A young lady, who lived with her old aunt, and was possessed of a pretty fortune in her own disposal, had given me, as I fancied, some reasons to expect success. The symptoms by which I was guided were striking. She had always laughed with me at her awkward acquaintances, and at her aunt among the number; she always observed that a man of sense would make a better husband than a fool, and I as constantly applied the observation in my own favor. She continually talked, in my company, of friendship and the beauties of the mind, and spoke of Mr. Shrimp my rival’s high-heeled shoes with detestation. These were circumstances which I thought strongly in my favor; so after resolving and re-resolving, I plucked up courage enough to tell her my mind. Miss heard my proposal with serenity, seeming at the same time to study the figures of her fan. Out at last it came. There was but one small objection to complete our happiness; which was no more than — that she was married three months before to Mr. Shrimp, with the high-heeled shoes! By way of consolation, however, she observed that, though I was disappointed in her, my addresses to her aunt would probably kindle her into

sensibility, as the old lady always allowed me to be very good-natured, and not to have the least share of harm in me."

Could Goldsmith have married a good woman — one suited to his temperament, who could have excused his features, admired his many noble qualities, respected his genius, and regulated his expenditures, the latter part of his life would doubtless have compensated for all the heartaches and other discomforts of earlier days; but after the death of his kind-hearted and ever devoted uncle it was his sad fate to struggle through life alone, and at last, bereft of every earthly endearment, and harassed by debts and other discouragements, when he weighed anchor and was leaving the storm-tossed shore he must have felt much as Byron did in declaring that if he ever succeeded in getting his soul detached from this mortal frame, there would be a lively scrimmage before it got back into that, or any other earthly body.

If it be true, as many believe, that departed souls are comforted by the sympathies and blessings of the earthly beneficiaries of their genius and their benevolence, the eternal happiness of Goldsmith's spirit is amply assured.

GOLDSMITH'S ESSAYS

In January 1760, Goldsmith began a series of short essays which he entitled "Letters from a

Chinese Philosopher residing in London, to his friends in the East," which were printed in a London newspaper called *The Public Ledger*. It was customary in those days for aspiring authors to launch their writings anonymously, then lay claim to them only in case they caught the public fancy; therefore when these essays assured the literary fame of their author he acknowledged them as his own, and they were subsequently printed in several editions under his direction. The experiences and observations of the Chinese philosopher's friend, "The Man in Black," are for the most part autobiographical, and of course the Chinese philosopher was no other than Goldsmith himself.

Goldsmith's poem, "The Traveller," was the first literary composition to which he affixed his name, and on its appearance in December 1764, — four years after he began his essays, — it immediately insured him a place in the foremost ranks of English poets. This in turn paved the way for his prose masterpiece, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, which had previously been sold to Francis Newbery, the bookseller, who fearing lest it might prove a financial failure, had held it for nearly two years till its author's fame should ripen sufficiently to insure its success. On this remarkable book — part fiction, but largely drawn from actual life — the greatest writers have vied

with one another in bestowing their unstinted praise. Irving acknowledged it to have been the delight of his boyhood, and "a source of enjoyment throughout life," while Goethe in his eighty-first year declared that it had enraptured him at the age of twenty; that in a manner it had formed an important part of his education, "influencing his taste and feelings throughout life," and that he had lately read it with renewed delight. In a similar vein Walter Scott and a dozen others of like calibre have swelled the anthem of praise into a veritable chorus.

But notwithstanding the fact that the fame of Goldsmith, like that of most great writers, rests chiefly on two or three masterpieces, the general verdict is that the varied charm of his essays is hardly excelled by any of his major compositions, either in verse or in prose. The literary quality and sterling good sense of the essays earned for him his first recognition in the world of letters at a time when the populace were far more absorbed in the uncertainties of war and other disturbances than in the lucubrations of some struggling aspirant to literary fame. Indeed he afterwards declared that "the public were too strenuously employed with their own follies to be assiduous in estimating mine."

Those who have read Goldsmith's essays need not be surfeited with useless encomiums, while

others who have not read them may now do so and form their just conclusions without the aid of commentary. The author of this preface has read them twice, and contemplates a third, and perhaps a fourth, reading as one of the pleasant diversions of future years.

The present work does not pretend to include all the essays that Goldsmith wrote. It is not to be supposed that any over-worked writer, however gifted, will always be up to the highest pitch of his genius, any more than we should suppose that all the fruit from an over-burdened apple tree will be of full size, well rounded and free from blemishes. In the process of elimination we have omitted such pieces as seem to fall short of the author's usual standard; in other words, where it appeared that he was urged more by the necessity of earning the guinea he is said to have received for each performance, than by the pressure of an over-filled brain.

LETTERS
OF
A CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

[The foregoing title was appended by Goldsmith to a series of letters, or essays, written by himself and printed in *The Public Ledger*, London, under the heading, "Letters from a Chinese Philosopher residing in London, to his friends in the East." Their literary merit was soon recognized by the public, and they became the stepping-stone from which their author rose to fame. And as the ground-stone of a stairway is generally one of its strongest units, so these essays take rank among the best productions of Goldsmith's pen.]

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THE schoolmen had formerly a very exact way of computing the abilities of their saints or authors. Escobar, for instance, was said to have learning as five, genius as four, and gravity as seven. Caramuel was greater than he. His learning was as eight, his genius as six, and his gravity as thirteen. Were I to estimate the merits of our Chinese philosopher by the same scale, I would not hesitate to state his genius still higher; but as to his learning and gravity, these I think might safely be marked as nine hundred and

ninety-nine, within one degree of absolute frigidity.

Yet, upon his first appearance here, many were angry not to find him as ignorant as a Tripoline ambassador, or an envoy from Mujac. They were surprised to find a man born so far from London — that school of prudence and wisdom — endued even with a moderate capacity. They expressed the same surprise at his knowledge that the Chinese do at ours. "How comes it," said they, "that the Europeans, so remote from China, think with so much justice and precision? They have never read our books, they scarcely know even our letters, and yet they talk and reason just as we do." The truth is, the Chinese and we are pretty much alike. Different degrees of refinement, and not of distance, mark the distinctions among mankind. Savages of the most opposite climates have all but one character of improvidence and rapacity; and tutored nations, however separate, make use of the very same methods to procure refined enjoyment.

The distinctions of polite nations are few; but such as are peculiar to the Chinese appear in every page of the following correspondence. The metaphors and allusions are all drawn from the East. Their formality our author carefully preserves. Many of their favorite tenets in morals are illustrated. The Chinese are always concise, so is he.

Simple, so is he. The Chinese are grave and sententious, so is he. But in one particular the resemblance is peculiarly striking: the Chinese are often dull, and so is he. Nor has my assistance been wanting. We are told in an old romance of a certain knight-errant and his horse who contracted an intimate friendship. The horse most usually bore the knight; but in cases of extraordinary despatch the knight returned the favor, and carried his horse. Thus in the intimacy between my author and me, he has usually given me a lift of his Eastern sublimity, and I have sometimes given him a return of my colloquial ease.

Yet it appears strange, in this season of panegyric, when scarcely an author passes unpraised either by his friends or himself, that such merit as our philosopher's should be forgotten. While the epithets of ingenious, copious, elaborate, and refined are lavished among the mob, like medals at a coronation, the lucky prizes fall on every side, but not one on him. I could on this occasion make myself melancholy by considering the capriciousness of public taste, or the mutability of fortune; but during this fit of morality, lest my reader should sleep, I'll take a nap myself, and when I awake tell him my dream.

I imagined the Thames was frozen over, and I stood by its side. Several booths were erected upon the ice, and I was told by one of the specta-

tors that Fashion Fair was going to begin. He added that every author who would carry his works there might probably find a very good reception. I was resolved, however, to observe the humors of the place in safety from the shore, sensible that ice was at best precarious, and having been always a little cowardly in my sleep.

Several of my acquaintance seemed much more hardy than I, and went over the ice with intrepidity. Some carried their works to the fair on sledges, some on carts, and those which were more voluminous were conveyed in wagons. Their temerity astonished me. I knew their cargoes were heavy, and expected every moment they would have gone to the bottom. They all entered the fair, however, in safety, and each soon after returned, to my great surprise, highly satisfied with his entertainment and the bargains he had brought away.

The success of such numbers at last began to operate upon me. If these, cried I, meet with favor and safety, some luck may perhaps, for once, attend the unfortunate. I am resolved to make a new adventure. The furniture, frippery, and fireworks of China have long been fashionably bought up. I'll try the fair with a small cargo of Chinese morality. If the Chinese have contributed to vitiate our taste, I'll try how far they can help to improve our understanding. But as others have driven into

the market in wagons, I'll cautiously begin by venturing with a wheelbarrow. Thus resolved, I baled up my goods and fairly ventured; when, upon just entering the fair, I fancied the ice that had supported a hundred wagons before cracked under me, and wheelbarrow and all went to the bottom.

Upon awaking from my reverie with the fright, I cannot help wishing that the pains taken in giving this correspondence an English dress had been employed in contriving new political systems, or new plots for farces. I might then have taken my station in the world, either as a poet or a philosopher, and made one in those little societies where men club to raise each other's reputation. But at present I belong to no particular class. I resemble one of those animals that has been forced from its forest to gratify human curiosity. My earliest wish was to escape unheeded through life; but I have been set up for half-pence, to fret and scamper at the end of my chain. Though none are injured by my rage, I am naturally too savage to court any friends by fawning, too obstinate to be taught new tricks, and too improvident to mind what may happen. I am appeased, though not contented. Too indolent for intrigue, and too timid to push for favor, I am — but what signifies what I am.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE CHINESE PHILOSOPHER IN LONDON

[*From Lien Chi Altangi to a Merchant in Amsterdam*]

FRIEND OF MY HEART, — May the wings of peace rest upon thy dwelling, and the shield of conscience preserve thee from vice and misery! For all thy favors accept my gratitude and esteem, the only tributes a poor philosophic wanderer can return. Sure, Fortune is resolved to make me unhappy, when she gives others a power of testifying their friendship by actions, and leaves me only words to express the sincerity of mine.

I am perfectly sensible of the delicacy with which you endeavor to lessen your own merit and my obligations. By calling your late instances of friendship only a return for former favors, you would induce me to impute to your justice what I owe to your generosity.

The services I did you at Canton, justice, humanity, and my office bade me perform; those you have done me since my arrival at Amsterdam, no laws obliged you to, no justice required; even half your favors would have been greater than my most sanguine expectations.

The sum of money, therefore, which you pri-

vately conveyed into my baggage, when I was leaving Holland, and which I was ignorant of till my arrival in London, I must beg leave to return. You have been bred a merchant, and I a scholar; you consequently love money better than I. You can find pleasure in superfluity; I am perfectly content with what is sufficient; take, therefore, what is yours; it may give you some pleasure, even though you have no occasion to use it; my happiness it cannot improve, for I have already all that I want.

My passage by sea from Rotterdam to England was more painful to me than all the journeys I ever made on land. I have traversed the immeasurable wilds of Mogul Tartary; felt all the rigors of Siberian skies; I have had my repose a hundred times disturbed by invading savages, and have seen, without shrinking, the desert sands rise like a troubled ocean all around me; against these calamities I was armed with resolution; but in my passage to England, though nothing occurred that gave the mariners any uneasiness, to one who was never at sea before, all was a subject of astonishment and terror. To find the land disappear, to see our ship mount the waves swift as an arrow from the Tartar bow, to hear the wind howling through the cordage, to feel a sickness which depresses even the spirits of the brave; these were unexpected distresses, and consequently assaulted me

when I was totally unprepared to receive them!

You men of Europe think nothing of a voyage by sea. With us of China, a man who has been from sight of land is regarded upon his return with admiration. I have known some provinces where there is not even a name for the ocean. What a strange people, therefore, am I got among, who have founded an empire on this unstable element, who build cities upon billows that rise higher than the mountains of Tipartala, and make the deep more formidable than the wildest tempest!

Such accounts as these, I must confess, were my first motives for seeing England. These induced me to undertake a journey of seven hundred painful days, in order to examine its opulence, buildings, sciences, arts, and manufactures on the spot. Judge, then, my disappointment on entering London to see no signs of that opulence so much talked of abroad: wherever I turn, I am presented with a gloomy solemnity in the houses, the streets, and the inhabitants; none of that beautiful gilding which makes a principal ornament in Chinese architecture. The streets of Nankin are sometimes strewn with gold-leaf; very different are those of London: in the midst of their pavements a great lazy puddle moves muddily along; heavy-laden machines, with wheels of unwieldly thickness, crowd up every passage; so that a stranger, in-

stead of finding time for observation, is often happy if he has time to escape from being crushed to pieces.

The houses borrow very few ornaments from architecture; their chief decoration seems to be a paltry piece of painting hung out at their doors or windows, at once a proof of their indigence and vanity: their vanity, in each having one of those pictures exposed to public view; and their indigence, in being unable to get them better painted. In this respect, the fancy of their painters is also deplorable. Could you believe it? I have seen five black lions and three blue boars in less than the circuit of half a mile; and yet you know that animals of these colors are nowhere to be found except in the wild imaginations of Europe.¹

From these circumstances in their buildings, and from the dismal looks of the inhabitants, I am induced to conclude that the nation is actually poor; and that, like the Persians, they make a splendid figure everywhere but at home. The proverb of Xixofou is, that a man's riches, may be seen in his eyes; if we judge of the English by this rule, there is not a poorer nation under the sun.

¹ "Our streets are filled with blue boars, black swans, and red lions; not to mention flying pigs, and hogs in armor. Strange! that one who has all the birds and beasts in nature to choose out of, should live at the sign of an *Ens Rationis*." — ADDISON. The house or door signs of London were taken down in 1766, and numbers and names substituted in their stead.

I have been here but two days, so will not be hasty in my decisions; such letters as I shall write to Fipsihi in Moscow, I beg you'll endeavor to forward with all diligence; I shall send them open, in order that you may take copies or translations, as you are equally versed in the Dutch and Chinese languages. Dear friend, think of my absence with regret, as I sincerely regret yours; even while I write, I lament our separation. Farewell.

ENGLISH PRIDE — LIBERTY — AN INSTANCE
OF BOTH — NEWSPAPERS — POLITENESS

[*To Fum Hoam*]

THE English seem as silent as the Japanese, yet vainer than the inhabitants of Siam. Upon my arrival I attributed that reserve to modesty, which I now find has its origin in pride. Condescend to address them first, and you are sure of their acquaintance; stoop to flattery, and you conciliate their friendship and esteem. They bear hunger, cold, fatigue, and all the miseries of life without shrinking; danger only calls forth their fortitude; they even exult in calamity; but contempt is what they cannot bear. An Englishman fears contempt more than death; he often flies to death as a refuge from its pressure, and dies when he fancies the world has ceased to esteem him.

Pride seems the source not only of their national

vices, but of their national virtues also. An Englishman is taught to love his king as his friend, but to acknowledge no other master than the laws which himself has contributed to enact. He despises those nations who, that one may be free, are all content to be slaves; who first lift a tyrant into terror, and then shrink under his power as if delegated from heaven. Liberty is echoed in all their assemblies; and thousands might be found ready to offer up their lives for the sound, though perhaps not one of all the number understands its meaning. The lowest mechanic, however, looks upon it as his duty to be a watchful guardian of his country's freedom, and often uses a language that might seem haughty, even in the mouth of the great emperor who traces his ancestry to the moon.

A few days ago, passing by one of their prisons, I could not avoid stopping, in order to listen to a dialogue, which I thought might afford me some entertainment. The conversation was carried on between a debtor through the grate of his prison, a porter who had stopped to rest his burden, and a soldier at the window. The subject was upon a threatened invasion from France, and each seemed extremely anxious to rescue his country from the impending danger. "For my part," cries the prisoner, "the greatest of my apprehensions is for our freedom; if the French should conquer, what

would become of English liberty? My dear friends, liberty is the Englishman's prerogative; we must preserve that at the expense of our lives; of that the French shall never deprive us; it is not to be expected that men who are slaves themselves would preserve our freedom should they happen to conquer." "Ay, slaves," cries the porter, "they are all slaves, fit only to carry burdens, every one of them. Before I would stoop to slavery, may this be my poison (and he held the goblet in his hand), may this be my poison — but I would sooner list for a soldier."

The soldier, taking the goblet from his friend, with much awe fervently cried out, "It is not so much our liberties as our religion that would suffer by such a change; ay, our religion, my lads. May the devil sink me into flames" (such was the solemnity of his adjuration), "if the French should come over, but our religion would be utterly undone." So saying, instead of a libation, he applied the goblet to his lips, and confirmed his sentiments with a ceremony of the most persevering devotion.

In short, every man here pretends to be a politician; even the fair sex are sometimes found to mix the severity of national altercation with the blandishments of love, and often become conquerors by more weapons of destruction than their eyes.

This universal passion for politics is gratified by daily gazettes, as with us at China. But as in

ours the emperor endeavors to instruct his people, in theirs the people endeavor to instruct the administration. You must not, however, imagine that they who compile these papers have any actual knowledge of the politics or the government of a state; they only collect their materials from the oracle of some coffee-house; which oracle has himself gathered them the night before from a beau at a gaming-table, who has pillaged his knowledge from a great man's porter, who has had his information from the great man's gentleman, who has invented the whole story for his own amusement the night preceding.

The English, in general, seem fonder of gaining the esteem than the love of those they converse with. This gives a formality to their amusements; their gayest conversations have something too wise for innocent relaxation; though in company you are seldom disgusted with the absurdity of a fool, you are seldom lifted into rapture by those strokes of vivacity which give instant though not permanent pleasure.

What they want, however, in gayety, they make up in politeness. You smile at hearing me praise the English for their politeness; you who have heard very different accounts from the missionaries at Pekin, who have seen such a different behavior in their merchants and seamen at home. But I must still repeat it, the English seem more

polite than any of their neighbors; their great art in this respect lies in endeavoring, while they oblige, to lessen the force of the favor. Other countries are fond of obliging a stranger; but seem desirous that he should be sensible of the obligation. The English confer their kindness with an appearance of indifference, and give away benefits with an air as if they despised them.

Walking a few days ago, between an English and a French man, into the suburbs of the city, we were overtaken by a heavy shower of rain. I was unprepared; but they had each large coats, which defended them from what seemed to me a perfect inundation. The Englishman seeing me shrink from the weather, accosted me thus: "Pshaw, man, what dost shrink at? here, take this coat; I don't want it; I find it no way useful to me; I had as lief be without it." The Frenchman began to show his politeness in turn. "My dear friend," cries he, "why won't you oblige me by making use of my coat? You see how well it defends me from the rain; I should not choose to part with it to others, but to such a friend as you I could even part with my skin to do him service."

From such minute instances as these, most reverend Fum Hoam, I am sensible your sagacity will collect instruction. The volume of nature is the book of knowledge; and he becomes most wise who makes the most judicious selection. Farewell.

ENGLISH PASSION FOR POLITICS — MAN- NERS OF DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

[*To the Same*]

I HAVE already informed you of the singular passion of this nation for politics. An Englishman, not satisfied with finding, by his own prosperity, the contending powers of Europe properly balanced, desires also to know the precise value of every weight in either scale. To gratify this curiosity, a leaf of political instruction is served up every morning with tea : when our politician has feasted upon this, he repairs to a coffee-house, in order to ruminate upon what he has read, and increase his collection ; from thence he proceeds to the ordinary, inquires what news, and treasuring up every acquisition there, hunts about all the evening in quest of more, and carefully adds it to the rest. Thus at night he retires home, full of the important advices of the day ; when lo ! awaking next morning, he finds the instructions of yesterday a collection of absurdity or palpable falsehood. This, one would think a mortifying repulse in the pursuit of wisdom ; yet our politician, no way discouraged, hunts on, in order to collect fresh materials, and in order to be again disappointed.

I have often admired the commercial spirit which prevails over Europe ; have been surprised to see them carry on a traffic with productions

that an Asiatic stranger would deem entirely useless. It is a proverb in China, that a European suffers not even his spittle to be lost; the maxim, however, is not sufficiently strong, since they sell even their lies to great advantage. Every nation drives a considerable trade in this commodity with their neighbors.

An English dealer in this way, for instance, has only to ascend to his workhouse, and manufacture a turbulent speech, averred to be spoken in the senate; or a report supposed to be dropped at court; a piece of scandal that strikes at a popular mandarin; or a secret treaty between two neighboring powers. When finished, these goods are baled up, and consigned to a factor abroad, who sends in return two battles, three sieges, and a shrewd letter filled with dashes —, blanks , and stars **** of great importance.

Thus you perceive that a single gazette is the joint manufacture of Europe; and he who would peruse it with a philosophical eye might perceive in every paragraph something characteristic of the nation to which it belongs. A map does not exhibit a more distinct view of the boundaries and situation of every country, than its news does a picture of the genius and the morals of its inhabitants. The superstition and erroneous delicacy of Italy, the formality of Spain, the cruelty of Portugal, the fears of Austria, the confidence of

Prussia, the levity of France, the avarice of Holland, the pride of England, the absurdity of Ireland, and the national partiality of Scotland are all conspicuous in every page.

But perhaps you may find more satisfaction in a real newspaper, than in my description of one; I therefore send a specimen, which may serve to exhibit the manner of their being written, and distinguish the characters of the various nations which are united in its composition.

Naples. — “We have lately dug up here a curious Etruscan monument, broken in two in the raising. The characters are scarce visible; but Nugosi, the learned antiquary, supposes it to have been erected in honor of Picus, a Latin king, as one of the lines may be plainly distinguished to begin with a P. It is hoped this discovery will produce something valuable, as the literati of our twelve academies are deeply engaged in the disquisition.”

Pisa. — “Since father Fudgi, prior of St. Gilbert’s, has gone to reside at Rome, no miracles have been performed at the shrine of St. Gilbert: the devout begin to grow uneasy, and some begin actually to fear that St. Gilbert has forsaken them with the reverend father.”

Lucca. — “The administrators of our serene republic have frequent conferences upon the part they shall take in the present commotions of Eu-

rope. Some are for sending a body of their troops, consisting of one company of foot and six horse-men, to make a diversion in favor of the empress-queen; others are as strenuous assertors of the Prussian interest; what turn these debates may take, time only can discover. However, certain it is, we shall be able to bring into the field, at the opening of the next campaign, seventy-five armed men, a commander-in-chief, and two drummers of great experience."

Spain. — "Yesterday the new king showed himself to his subjects, and, after having stayed half an hour in his balcony, retired to the royal apartment. The night concluded on this extraordinary occasion with illuminations, and other demonstrations of joy. The queen is more beautiful than the rising sun, and reckoned one of the first wits in Europe; she had a glorious opportunity of displaying the readiness of her invention, and her skill in repartee, lately at court. The Duke of Lerma, coming up to her with a low bow and a smile, and presenting a nosegay set with diamonds 'Madam,' cries he, 'I am your most obedient humble servant.' 'Oh, sir,' replies the queen, without any prompter, or the least hesitation, 'I'm very proud of the very great honor you do me.' Upon which she made a low courtesy, and all the courtiers fell a-laughing at the readiness and the smartness of her reply."

Lisbon. — “Yesterday we had an *auto-da-fé*, at which were burnt three young women accused of heresy, one of them of exquisite beauty, two Jews, and an old woman convicted of being a witch: one of the friars, who attended this last, reports that he saw the devil fly out of her, at the stake, in the shape of a flame of fire. The populace behaved on this occasion with great good-humor, joy, and sincere devotion.

“Our merciful sovereign has been for some time past recovered of his fright; though so atrocious an attempt deserved to exterminate half the nation, yet he has been graciously pleased to spare the lives of his subjects, and not above five hundred have been broken upon the wheel, or otherwise executed, upon this horrid occasion.”

Vienna. — “We have received certain advices that a party of twenty thousand Austrians, having attacked a much superior body of Prussians, put them all to flight, and took the rest prisoners of war.”

Berlin. — “We have certain advices that a party of twenty thousand Prussians, having attacked a much superior body of Austrians, put them to flight, and took a great number of prisoners, with their military chest, cannon, and baggage. Though we have not succeeded this campaign to our wishes, yet when we think of him who commands us, we rest in security: while we

sleep, our king is ever watchful for our safety."

Paris. — "We shall soon strike a signal blow. We have seventeen flat-bottomed boats at Havre. The people are in excellent spirits, and our ministers make no difficulty in raising the supplies.

"We are all undone; the people are discontented to the last degree; the ministers are obliged to have recourse to the most rigorous methods to raise the expenses of the war.

"Our distresses are great; but Madame Pompadour continues to supply our king, who is now growing old, with a fresh lady every night. His health, thank Heaven! is still pretty well; nor is he in the least unfit, as was reported, for any kind of royal exercitation. He was so frightened at the affair of Damiens, that his physicians were apprehensive lest his reason should suffer, but that wretch's tortures soon composed the kingly terrors of his breast."

England. — "Wanted an usher to an academy. N.B. — He must be able to read, dress hair, and must have had the smallpox."

Dublin. — "We hear that there is a benevolent subscription on foot among the nobility and gentry of this kingdom, who are great patrons of merit, in order to assist Black and All Black in his contest with the Padareen mare. We hear from Germany that Prince Ferdinand has gained a complete victory, and taken twelve kettle-drums,

five standards, and four wagons of ammunition, prisoners of war."

Edinburgh. — "We are positive when we say that Saunders M'Gregor, who was lately executed for horse-stealing, is not a Scotchman, but born in Carrickfergus." Farewell.

HAPPINESS LOST BY SEEKING AFTER RE-
FINEMENT — THE CHINESE PHILOSO-
PHER'S DISGRACES

[*Fum Hoam to Lien Chi Altangi*]

WHETHER sporting on the flowery banks of the river Irtis, or scaling the steepy mountains of Douchenour; whether traversing the black deserts of Kobi, or giving lessons of politeness to the savage inhabitants of Europe; in whatever country, whatever climate, and whatever circumstances, all hail! May Tien, the universal soul, take you under his protection, and inspire you with a superior portion of himself!

How long, my friend, shall an enthusiasm for knowledge continue to obstruct your happiness, and tear you from all the connections that make life pleasing? How long will you continue to rove from climate to climate, circled by thousands, and yet without a friend, feeling all the inconveniences of a crowd, and all the anxiety of being alone?

I know you will reply, that the refined pleasure of growing every day wiser is a sufficient recom-

pense for every inconvenience. I know you will talk of the vulgar satisfaction of soliciting happiness from sensual enjoyment only; and probably enlarge upon the exquisite raptures of sentimental bliss. Yet, believe me, friend, you are deceived; all our pleasures, though seemingly never so remote from sense, derive their origin from some one of the senses. The most exquisite demonstration in mathematics, or the most pleasing disquisition in metaphysics, if it does not ultimately tend to increase some sensual satisfaction, is delightful only to fools, or to men who have by long habit contracted a false idea of pleasure; and he who separates sensual and sentimental enjoyments, seeking happiness from mind alone, is, in fact, as wretched as the naked inhabitant of the forest, who places all happiness in the first, regardless of the latter. There are two extremes in this respect — the savage, who swallows down the draught of pleasure without staying to reflect on his happiness; and the sage, who passeth the cup while he reflects on the conveniences of drinking.

It is with a heart full of sorrow, my dear Altangi, that I must inform you, that what the world calls happiness must now be yours no longer. Our great emperor's displeasure at your leaving China, contrary to the rules of our government and the immemorial custom of the empire, has produced

the most terrible effects. Your wife, daughter, and the rest of your family, have been seized by his order, and appropriated to his use; all, except your son, are now the peculiar property of him who possesses all: him I have hidden from the officers employed for this purpose; and even at the hazard of my life I have concealed him. The youth seems obstinately bent on finding you out, wherever you are; he is determined to face every danger that opposes his pursuit. Though yet but fifteen, all his father's virtues and obstinacy sparkle in his eyes, and mark him as one destined to no mediocrity of fortune.

You see, my dearest friend, what imprudence has brought thee to; from opulence, a tender family, surrounding friends, and your master's esteem, it has reduced thee to want, persecution, and, still worse, to our mighty monarch's displeasure. Want of prudence is too frequently the want of virtue; nor is there on earth a more powerful advocate for vice than poverty. As I shall endeavor to guard thee from the one, so guard thyself from the other; and still think of me with affection and esteem. Farewell.

THE CHINESE PHILOSOPHER DECEIVED

[*To Fum Hoam*]

How insupportable, O thou possessor of heavenly wisdom, would be this separation, this im-

measurable distance from my friends, were I not able thus to delineate my heart upon paper, and to send thee daily a map of my mind!

I am every day better reconciled to the people among whom I reside, and begin to fancy that in time I shall find them more opulent, more charitable, and more hospitable than I at first imagined. I begin to learn somewhat of their manners and customs, and to see reasons for several deviations which they make from us, from whom all other nations derive their politeness as well as their original.

In spite of taste, in spite of prejudice, I now begin to think their women tolerable. I can now look on a languishing blue eye without disgust, and pardon a set of teeth even though whiter than ivory. I now begin to fancy there is no universal standard for beauty. The truth is, the manners of the ladies in this city are so very open and so vastly engaging, that I am inclined to pass over the more glaring defects of their persons, since compensated by the more solid, yet latent beauties of the mind. What though they want black teeth, or are deprived of the allurements of feet no bigger than their thumbs, yet still they have souls, my friend; such souls, so free, so pressing, so hospitable, and so engaging! I have received more invitations in the streets of London from the sex in one night, than I have met with at Pekin in twelve moons.

Every evening, as I return home from my usual solitary excursions, I am met by several of those well-disposed daughters of hospitality, at different times, and in different streets, richly dressed, and with minds not less noble than their appearance. You know that nature has indulged me with a person by no means agreeable; yet are they too generous to object to my homely appearance; they feel no repugnance at my broad face and flat nose; they perceive me to be a stranger, and that alone is a sufficient recommendation. They even seem to think it their duty to do the honors of the country by every act of complaisance in their power. One takes me under the arm, and in a manner forces me along; another catches me round the neck, and desires to partake in this office of hospitality; while a third, kinder still, invites me to refresh my spirits with wine. Wine is in England reserved only for the rich; yet here even wine is freely given away to the utter stranger!

A few nights ago, one of these generous creatures, dressed all in white, and flaunting like a meteor by my side, forcibly attended me home to my own apartment. She seemed charmed with the elegance of the furniture, and the convenience of my situation: and well indeed she might, for I have hired an apartment for not less than two shillings of their money every week. But her

civility did not rest here; for at parting, being desirous to know the hour and perceiving my watch out of order, she kindly took it to be repaired by a relation of her own, which you may imagine will save some expense; and she assures me that it will cost her nothing. I shall have it back in a few days, when mended, and am preparing a proper speech, expressive of my gratitude on the occasion. "Celestial excellence," I intend to say, "happy I am in having found out, after many painful adventures, a land of innocence, and a people of humanity: I may rove into other climes, and converse with nations yet unknown, but where shall I meet a soul of such purity as that which resides in thy breast? Sure thou hast been nurtured by the bill of the Shin Shin, or sucked the breasts of the provident Gin Hiung. The melody of thy voice could rob the Chong Fou of her whelps, or inveigle the Boh that lives in the midst of the waters. Thy servant shall ever retain a sense of thy favors, and one day boast of thy virtue, sincerity, and truth, among the daughters of China." Adieu.

THE LICENTIOUSNESS OF THE ENGLISH
WITH REGARD TO WOMEN

I HAVE been deceived! She whom I fancied a daughter of paradise has proved to be one of the infamous disciples of Han! I have lost a trifle; I

have gained the consolation of having discovered a deceiver. I once more, therefore, relax into my former indifference with regard to the English ladies; they once more begin to appear disagreeable in my eyes. Thus is my whole time passed in forming conclusions which the next minute's experience may probably destroy; the present moment becomes a comment on the past, and I improve rather in humility than wisdom.

Their laws and religion forbid the English to keep more than one woman; I therefore concluded that prostitutes were banished from society. I was deceived; every man here keeps as many wives as he can maintain. The laws are cemented with blood, praised, and disregarded. The very Chinese, whose religion allows him two wives, takes not half the liberties of the English in this particular. Their laws may be compared to the books of the Sibyls; they are held in great veneration, but seldom read, or seldomer understood; even those who pretend to be their guardians dispute about the meaning of many of them, and confess their ignorance of others. The law, therefore, which commands them to have but one wife is strictly observed only by those for whom one is more than sufficient, or by such as have not money to buy two. As for the rest, they violate it publicly, and some glory in its violation. They seem to think, like the Persians, that they give evident marks of

manhood by increasing their seraglio. A mandarin, therefore, here generally keeps four wives, a gentleman three, and a stage-player two. As for the magistrates, the country justices, and squires, they are employed first in debauching young virgins, and then punishing the transgression.

From such a picture you will be apt to conclude that he who employs four ladies for his amusement has four times as much constitution to spare as he who is contented with one; that a mandarin is much cleverer than a gentleman, and a gentleman than a player; and yet it is quite the reverse: a mandarin is frequently supported on spindle shanks, appears emaciated by luxury, and is obliged to have recourse to variety, merely from the weakness, not the vigor, of his constitution — the number of his wives being the most equivocal symptom of his virility.

Beside the country squire, there is also another set of men whose whole employment consists in corrupting beauty. These the silly part of the fair sex call amiable; the more sensible part of them, however, give them the title of abominable. You will probably demand what are the talents of a man thus caressed by the majority of the opposite sex? what talents, or what beauty is he possessed of superior to the rest of his fellows? To answer you directly, he has neither talents nor beauty, but then he is possessed of impudence and assiduity.

With assiduity and impudence, men of all ages and all figures may command admirers. I have even been told of some who made professions of expiring for love, when all the world could perceive they were going to die of old age; and what is more surprising still, such battered beaux are generally most infamously successful.

A fellow of this kind employs three hours every morning in dressing his head, by which is understood only his hair. He is a professed admirer, not of any particular lady, but of the whole sex. He is to suppose every lady has caught cold every night, which gives him an opportunity of calling to see how she does the next morning. He is upon all occasions to show himself in very great pain for the ladies: if a lady drops even a pin he is to fly in order to present it. He never speaks to a lady without advancing his mouth to her ear, by which he frequently addresses more senses than one. Upon proper occasions he looks excessively tender. This is performed by laying his hand upon his heart, shutting his eyes, and showing his teeth. He is excessively fond of dancing a minuet with the ladies, by which is only meant walking round the floor eight or ten times with his hat on, affecting great gravity, and sometimes looking tenderly on his partner. He never affronts any man himself, and never resents an affront from another. He has an infinite variety of small talk

upon all occasions, and laughs when he has nothing more to say. Such is the killing creature who prostrates himself to the sex till he has undone them; all whose submissions are the effects of design, and who to please the ladies almost becomes himself a lady.

THE FUNERAL SOLEMNITIES OF THE ENGLISH — THEIR PASSION FOR FLATTERING EPITAPHS

FROM the funeral solemnities of the Daures, who think themselves the politest people in the world, I must make a transition of the funeral solemnities of the English, who think themselves as polite as they. The numberless ceremonies which are used here when a person is sick appear to me so many evident marks of fear and apprehension. Ask an Englishman, however, whether he is afraid of death, and he boldly answers in the negative; but observe his behavior in circumstances of approaching sickness, and you will find his actions give his assertions the lie.

The Chinese are very sincere in this respect; they hate to die, and they confess their terrors;¹ a great part of their life is spent in preparing things proper for their funeral. A poor artisan

¹ The Chinese seldom mention death except by a circumlocution, as "to become immortal;" that is, in the modified sense of the Buddhists. — DAVIS's *Chinese*.

will spend half his income in providing himself a tomb twenty years before he wants it; and denies himself the necessaries of life, that he may be amply provided for when he shall want them no more.¹

But people of distinction in England really deserve pity; for they die in circumstances of the most extreme distress. It is an established rule never to let a man know that he is dying; physicians are sent for, the clergy are called, and everything passes in silent solemnity round the sick-bed. The patient is in agonies, looks round for pity; yet not a single creature will say that he is dying. If he is possessed of fortune, his relations entreat him to make his will, as it may restore the tranquillity of his mind. He is desired to undergo the rites of the Church, for decency requires it. His friends take their leave only because they do not care to see him in pain. In short, a hundred stratagems are used to make him do what he might have been induced to perform only by being told, "Sir, you are past all hopes, and had as good think decently of dying."

Besides all this, the chamber is darkened, the whole house echoes to the cries of the wife, the lamentations of the children, the grief of the ser-

¹ Of all the subjects of their care, there are none which the Chinese so religiously attend to as the tombs of their ancestors, conceiving that any neglect is sure to be followed by worldly misfortune. — DAVIS'S *Chinese*.

vants, and the sighs of friends. The bed is surrounded with priests and doctors in black, and only flambeaux emit a yellow gloom. Where is the man, how intrepid soever, that would not shrink at such a hideous solemnity? For fear of affrighting their expiring friends, the English practise all that can fill them with terror. Strange effect of human prejudice, thus to torture, merely from mistaken tenderness!

You see, my friend, what contradictions there are in the tempers of those islanders: when prompted by ambition, revenge, or disappointment, they meet death with the utmost resolution; the very man who in his bed would have trembled at the aspect of a doctor, shall go with intrepidity to attack a bastion, or deliberately noose himself up in his garters.

The passion of the Europeans for magnificent interments is equally strong with that of the Chinese. When a tradesman dies, his frightful face is painted up by an undertaker, and placed in a proper situation to receive company; this is called lying in state. To this disagreeable spectacle all the idlers in town flock, and learn to loathe the wretch dead, whom they despised when living. In this manner you see some, who would have refused a shilling to save the life of their dearest friend, bestow thousands on adorning their putrid corpse. I have been told of a fellow who, grown

rich by the price of blood, left it in his will that he should lie in state, and thus unknowingly gibbeted himself into infamy, when he might have otherwise quietly retired into oblivion.

When the person is buried, the next care is to make his epitaph; they are generally reckoned best which flatter most; such relations, therefore, as have received most benefits from the defunct, discharge this friendly office, and generally flatter in proportion to their joy. When we read those monumental histories of the dead, it may be justly said that "all men are equal in the dust;" for they all appear equally remarkable for being the most sincere Christians, the most benevolent neighbors, and the honestest men of their time. To go through a European cemetery, one would be apt to wonder how mankind could have so basely degenerated from such excellent ancestors. Every tomb pretends to claim your reverence and regret: some are praised for piety in those inscriptions, who never entered the temple until they were dead; some are praised for being excellent poets, who were never mentioned except for their dullness when living; others for sublime orators, who were never noted except for their impudence; and others still for military achievements, who were never in any other skirmishes but with the watch. Some even make epitaphs for themselves, and bespeak the reader's good-will. It were, indeed, to be

wished that every man would early learn in this manner to make his own; that he would draw it up in terms as flattering as possible, and that he would make it the employment of his whole life to deserve it!

I have not yet been in a place called Westminster Abbey, but soon intend to visit it. There, I am told, I shall see justice done to deceased merit: none, I am told, are permitted to be buried there but such as have adorned as well as improved mankind. There no intruders, by the influence of friends or fortune, presume to mix their unhallowed bones with philosophers, heroes and poets. Nothing but true merit has a place in that awful sanctuary.¹ The guardianship of the tombs is committed to several reverend priests, who are never guilty, for a superior reward, of taking down the names of good men to make room for others of equivocal character, nor ever profane the sacred walls with pageants that posterity cannot know, or shall blush to own.

I always was of the opinion that sepulchral honors of this kind should be considered as a national concern, and not trusted to the care of the priests of any country, how respectable soever; but, from the conduct of the reverend personages whose disinterested patriotism I shall shortly be able to discover, I am taught to retract my former senti-

¹ Goldsmith here indulges in sarcasm. See next essay.

ments. It is true, the Spartans and the Persians made a fine political use of sepulchral vanity; they permitted none to be thus interred who had not fallen in the vindication of their country. A monument thus became a real mark of distinction; it nerved the hero's arm with tenfold vigor, and he fought without fear who only fought for a grave. Farewell.

A VISIT TO WESTMINSTER ABBEY

I AM just returned from Westminster Abbey, the place of sepulture for the philosophers, heroes, and kings of England. What a gloom do monumental inscriptions and all the venerable remains of deceased merit inspire! Imagine a temple marked with the hand of antiquity, solemn as religious awe, adorned with all the magnificence of barbarous profusion, dim windows, fretted pillars, long colonnades, and dark ceilings. Think, then, what were my sensations at being introduced to such a scene. I stood in the midst of the temple and threw my eyes round on the walls, filled with the statues, the inscriptions, and the monuments of the dead.

Alas! I said to myself, how does pride attend the puny child of dust even to the grave! Even humble as I am, I possess more consequence in the present scene than the greatest hero of them all; they have toiled for an hour to gain a transient

immortality, and are at length retired to the grave where they have no attendant but the worm, none to flatter but the epitaph.

As I was indulging such reflections, a gentleman, dressed in black,¹ perceiving me to be a stranger, came up, entered into conversation, and politely offered to be my instructor and guide through the temple. "If any monument," said he, "should particularly excite your curiosity, I shall endeavor to satisfy your demands." I accepted with thanks the gentleman's offer, adding that "I was come to observe the policy, the wisdom, and the justice of the English, in conferring rewards upon deceased merit. If adulation like this," continued I, "be properly conducted, as it can no ways injure those who are flattered, so it may be a glorious incentive to those who are now capable of enjoying it. It is the duty of every good government to turn this monumental pride to its own advantage; to become strong in the aggregate from the weakness of the individual. If none but the truly great have a place in this awful repository, a temple like this will give the finest lessons of morality, and be a strong incentive to true ambition. I am told that none have a place here but characters of the most distinguished merit." The

¹ Behind the mask of this "gentleman in black," who appears frequently from here on, we easily recognize Goldsmith himself. — H. H. H.

man in black seemed impatient at my observations; so I discontinued my remarks, and we walked on together to take a view of every particular monument in order as it lay.

As the eye is naturally caught by the finest objects, I could not avoid being particularly curious about one monument, which appeared more beautiful than the rest. "That," said I to my guide, "I take to be the tomb of some very great man. By the peculiar excellence of the workmanship, and the magnificence of the design, this must be a trophy raised to the memory of some king who has saved his country from ruin, or law-giver who has reduced his fellow-citizens from anarchy into just subjection."

"It is not requisite," replied my companion, smiling, "to have such qualifications in order to have a very fine monument here. More humble abilities will suffice."

"What! I suppose, then, the gaining two or three battles, or the taking half a score towns, is thought a sufficient qualification?"

"Gaining battles, or taking towns," replied the man in black, "may be of service; but a gentleman may have a very fine monument here without ever seeing a battle or a siege."

"This, then, is the monument of some poet, I presume, of one whose wit has gained him immortality?"

"No, sir," replied my guide, "the gentleman who lies here never made verses; and as for wit, he despised it in others because he had none himself."

"Pray, tell me then, in a word," said I, peevishly, "what is the great man who lies here particularly remarkable for?"

"Remarkable, sir!" said my companion; "why, sir, the gentleman that lies here is remarkable, very remarkable — for a tomb in Westminster Abbey."

"But, head of my ancestors! how has he got here? I fancy he could never bribe the guardians of the temple to give him a place. Should he not be ashamed to be seen among company where even moderate merit would look like infamy?"

"I suppose," replied the man in black, "the gentleman was rich, and his friends, as is usual in such a case, told him he was great. He readily believed them; the guardians of the temple, as they got by the self-delusion, were ready to believe him too; so he paid his money for a fine monument; and the workman, as you see, has made him one of the most beautiful. Think not, however, that this gentleman is singular in his desire of being buried among the great; there are several others in the temple, who, hated and shunned by the great while alive, have come here, fully resolved to keep them company now they are dead."

As we walked along to a particular part of the temple, "There," says the gentleman, pointing with his finger, "that is the Poets' Corner; there you see the monuments of Shakespeare, and Milton, and Prior, and Drayton."

"Drayton!" I replied, "I never heard of him before; but I have been told of one Pope; is he there?"

"It is time enough," replied my guide, "these hundred years; he is not long dead; people have not done hating him yet."

"Strange," cried I; "can any be found to hate a man whose life was wholly spent in entertaining and instructing his fellow-creatures?"

"Yes," says my guide, "they hate him for that very reason. There is a set of men called answerers of books, who take upon them to watch the republic of letters, and distribute reputation by the sheet; they somewhat resemble the eunuchs in a seraglio, who are incapable of giving pleasure themselves, and hinder those that would. These answerers have no other employment but to cry out Dunce, and Scribbler; to praise the dead, and revile the living; to grant a man of confessed abilities some small share of merit; to applaud twenty blockheads, in order to gain the reputation of candor; and to revile the moral character of the man whose writings they cannot injure. Such wretches are kept in pay by some mercenary

bookseller, or more frequently the bookseller himself ¹ takes this dirty work off their hands, as all that is required is to be very abusive and very dull. Every poet of any genius is sure to find such enemies; he feels, though he seems to despise, their malice; they make him miserable here, and, in the pursuit of empty fame, at last he gains solid anxiety.

"Has this been the case with every poet I see here?" cried I.

"Yes, with every mother's son of them," replied he, "except he happened to be born a mandarin. If he has much money, he may buy reputation from your book-answerers, as well as a monument from the guardians of the temple."

"But are there not some men of distinguished taste, as in China, who are willing to patronize men of merit, and soften the rancor of malevolent dulness?"

"I own there are many," replied the man in black; "but, alas, sir, the book-answerers crowd about them, and call themselves the writers of books; and the patron is too indolent to distinguish; thus poets are kept at a distance, while their enemies eat up all their rewards at the mandarin's table."

¹ All this is aimed at Griffiths, the publisher and proprietor of the *Monthly Review*, and the review by Kenrick of Goldsmith's "Inquiry" in that publication.

Leaving this part of the temple, we made up to an iron gate, through which my companion told me we were to pass, in order to see the monuments of the kings. Accordingly I marched up without further ceremony, and was going to enter, when a person, who held the gate in his hand, told me I must pay first. I was surprised at such a demand, and asked the man whether the people of England kept a show? whether the paltry sum he demanded was not a national reproach? whether it was not more to the honor of the country to let their magnificence or their antiquities be openly seen, than thus meanly to tax a curiosity which tended to their own honor?

“As for your questions,” replied the gate-keeper, “to be sure they may be very right, because I don’t understand them; but, as for that there threepence, I farm it from one — who rents it from another — who hires it from a third — who leases it from the guardians of the temple, and we all must live.” I expected, upon paying here, to see something extraordinary, since what I had seen for nothing filled me with so much surprise: but in this I was disappointed; there was little more within than black coffins, rusty armor, tattered standards, and some few slovenly figures in wax. I was sorry I had paid, but I comforted myself by considering it would be my last payment. A person attended us, who without once

blushing, told a hundred lies; he talked of a lady who died by pricking her finger; of a king with a golden head, and twenty such pieces of absurdity. "Look ye there, gentlemen," says he, pointing to an old oak chair, "there's a curiosity for ye! in that chair the kings of England were crowned; you see also a stone underneath, and that stone is Jacob's pillow." I could see no curiosity either in the oak chair or the stone; could I, indeed, behold one of the old kings of England seated in this, or Jacob's head laid upon the other, there might be something curious in the sight; but in the present case there was no more reason for my surprise than if I should pick a stone from their streets, and call it a curiosity merely because one of the kings happened to tread upon it as he passed in a procession.

From hence our conductor led us through several dark walks and winding ways, uttering lies, talking to himself, and flourishing a wand which he held in his hand. He reminded me of the black magicians of Kobi. After we had been almost fatigued with a variety of objects, he at last desired me to consider attentively a certain suit of armor, which seemed to show nothing remarkable. "This armor," said he, "belonged to General Monk."

"Very surprising that a general should wear armor!"

"And pray," added he, "observe this cap: this is General Monk's cap."

"Very strange indeed, very strange, that a general should have a cap also! Pray, friend, what might this cap have cost originally?"

"That, sir," says he, "I don't know; but this cap is all the wages I have for my trouble."

"A very small recompense truly," said I.

"Not so very small," replied he, "for every gentleman puts some money into it, and I spend the money."

"What, more money! still more money!"

"Every gentleman gives something, sir."

"I'll give thee nothing," returned I; "the guardians of the temple should pay you your wages, friend, and not permit you to squeeze thus from every spectator. When we pay our money at the door to see a show, we never give more as we are going out. Sure, the guardians of the temple can never think they get enough. Show me the gate; if I stay longer, I may probably meet with more of those ecclesiastical beggars."

Thus leaving the temple precipitately, I returned to my lodgings, in order to ruminate over what was great, and to despise what was mean, in the occurrences of the day.

OF THE WAR NOW CARRIED ON BETWEEN
FRANCE AND ENGLAND, WITH ITS
FRIVOLOUS MOTIVES

WERE an Asiatic politician to read the treaties of peace and friendship that have been annually making for more than a hundred years among the inhabitants of Europe, he would probably be surprised how it should ever happen that Christian princes could quarrel among each other. Their compacts for peace are drawn up with the utmost precision, and ratified with the greatest solemnity; to these each party promises a sincere and inviolable obedience, and all wears the appearance of open friendship and unreserved reconciliation.

Yet, notwithstanding those treaties, the people of Europe are almost continually at war. There is nothing more easy than to break a treaty ratified in all the usual forms, and yet neither party be the aggressor. One side, for instance, breaks a trifling article by mistake; the opposite party, upon this, makes a small but premeditated reprisal; this brings on a return of greater from the other; both sides complain of injuries and infractions; war is declared; they beat; are beaten; some two or three hundred thousand men are killed; they grow tired; leave off just where they began; and so sit coolly down to make new treaties.

The English and French seem to place themselves foremost among the champion states of

Europe. Though parted by a narrow sea, yet are they entirely of opposite characters; and from their vicinity are taught to fear and admire each other. They are at present engaged in a very destructive war, have already spilled much blood, are excessively irritated, and all upon account of one side's desiring to wear greater quantities of *furs* than the other.

The pretext of the war is about some lands a thousand leagues off — a country cold, desolate, and hideous; a country belonging to a people who were in possession from time immemorial. The savages of Canada claim a property in the country in dispute; they have all the pretensions which long possession can confer. Here they had reigned for ages without rivals in dominion, and knew no enemies but the prowling bear or insidious tiger; their native forests produced all the necessaries of life, and they found ample luxury in the enjoyment. In this manner they might have continued to live to eternity, had not the English been informed that those countries produced furs in great abundance. From that moment the country became an object of desire: it was found that furs were things very much wanted in England; the ladies edged some of their clothes with furs, and muffs were worn both by gentlemen and ladies. In short, furs were found indispensably necessary for the happiness of the state; and the king

was consequently petitioned to grant, not only the country of Canada, but all the savages belonging to it, to the subjects of England, in order to have the people supplied with proper quantities of this necessary commodity.

So very reasonable a request was immediately complied with, and large colonies were sent abroad to procure furs, and take possession. The French, who were equally in want of furs (for they were as fond of muffs and tippets as the English), made the same request to their monarch, and met with the same gracious reception from their king, who generously granted what was not his to give. Wherever the French landed they called the country their own; and the English took possession, wherever they came, upon the same equitable pretensions. The harmless savages made no opposition; and, could the intruders have agreed together, they might peaceably have shared this desolate country between them. But they quarrelled about the boundaries of their settlements, about grounds and rivers to which neither side could show any other right than that of power, and which neither could occupy but by usurpation. Such is the contest, that no honest man can heartily wish success to either party.

The war has continued for some time with various success. At first the French seemed victorious, but the English have of late dispossessed

them of the whole country in dispute. Think not, however, that success on one side is the harbinger of peace; on the contrary, both parties must be heartily tired to effect even a temporary reconciliation. It should seem the business of the victorious party to offer terms of peace; but there are many in England who, encouraged by success, are for still protracting the war.

The best English politicians, however, are sensible that to keep their present conquests would be rather a burden than an advantage to them; rather a diminution of their strength than an increase of power. It is in the politic as in the human constitution: if the limbs grow too large for the body, their size, instead of improving, will diminish the vigor of the whole. The colonies should always bear an exact proportion to the mother country; when they grow populous they grow powerful, and by becoming powerful they become independent also. Thus, subordination is destroyed, and a country swallowed up in the extent of its own dominions. The Turkish empire would be more formidable were it less extensive, were it not for those countries which it can neither command nor give entirely away; which it is obliged to protect, but from which it has no power to exact obedience.

Yet, obvious as these truths are, there are many Englishmen who are for transplanting new col-

onies into this late acquisition, for peopling the deserts of America with the refuse of their countrymen, and (as they express it) with the waste of an exuberant nation. But who are those unhappy creatures who are to be thus drained away? Not the sickly, for they are unwelcome guests abroad as well as at home; nor the idle, for they would starve as well behind the Appalachian mountains as in the streets of London. This refuse is composed of the laborious and enterprising, of such men as can be serviceable to their country at home; of men who ought to be regarded as the sinews of the people, and cherished with every degree of political indulgence. And what are the commodities which this colony, when established, is to produce in return? Why, raw silk, hemp, and tobacco. England, therefore, must make an exchange of her best and bravest subjects for raw silk, hemp, and tobacco; her hardy veterans and honest tradesmen must be trucked for a box of snuff or a silk petticoat. Strange absurdity! Surely the politics of the Daures are not more strange, who sell their religion, their wives, and their liberty for a glass bead or a paltry penknife. Farewell.

THE STORY OF THE CHINESE MATRON

THE English love their wives with much passion, the Hollanders with much prudence; the

English, when they give their hands, frequently give their hearts; the Dutch give the hand, but keep the heart wisely in their own possession. The English love with violence, and expect violent love in return; the Dutch are satisfied with the slightest acknowledgement, for they give little away. The English expend many of the matrimonial comforts in the first year; the Dutch frugally husband out their pleasures, and are always constant because they are always different.

There seems very little difference between a Dutch bridegroom and a Dutch husband. Both are equally possessed of the same cool unexpected serenity; they can see neither elysium nor paradise behind the curtain; and Yiffrow is not more a goddess on the wedding-night than after twenty years' matrimonial acquaintance. On the other hand, many of the English marry in order to have one happy month in their lives: they seem incapable of looking beyond that period; they unite in hopes of finding rapture, and, disappointed in that, disdain ever to accept of happiness. From hence we see open hatred ensue; or what is worse, concealed disgust under the appearance of fulsome endearment. Much formality, great civility, and studied compliments are exhibited in public; cross looks, sulky silence, or open recrimination fill up their hours of private entertainment.

Hence I am taught, whenever I see a new-

married couple more than ordinarily fond before faces, to consider them as attempting to impose upon the company or themselves; either hating each other heartily, or consuming that stock of love in the beginning of their course which should serve them through their whole journey. Neither side should expect those instances of kindness which are inconsistent with true freedom or happiness to bestow. Love, when founded in the heart, will show itself in a thousand unmediated sallies of fondness; but every cool, deliberate exhibition of the passion only argues little understanding, or great insincerity.

Choang was the fondest husband and Hansi the most endearing wife in all the kingdom of Korea: they were a pattern of conjugal bliss; the inhabitants of the country around saw and envied their felicity; wherever Choang came, Hansi was sure to follow; and in all the pleasures of Hansi, Choang was admitted a partner. They walked hand-in-hand wherever they appeared, showing every mark of mutual satisfaction; embracing, kissing, their mouths were forever joined, and, to speak in the language of anatomy, it was with them one perpetual anastomosis.

Their love was so great that it was thought nothing could interrupt their mutual peace; when an accident happened which, in some measure, diminished the husband's assurance of his wife's

fidelity; for love so refined as his was subject to a thousand little disquietudes.

Happening to go one day alone among the tombs that lay at some distance from his house, he there perceived a lady dressed in the deepest mourning (being clothed all over in white), fanning the wet clay that was raised over one of the graves with a large fan, which she held in her hand. Choang, who had early been taught wisdom in the school of Lao, was unable to assign a cause for her present employment, and coming up, civilly demanded the reason. "Alas," replied the lady, her eyes bathed in tears, "how is it possible to survive the loss of my husband, who lies buried in this grave! He was the best of men, the tenderest of husbands; with his dying breath he bid me never marry again till the earth over his grave should be dry; and here you see me steadily resolving to obey his will, and endeavoring to dry it with my fan. I have employed two whole days in fulfilling his commands, and am determined not to marry till they are punctually obeyed, even though his grave should take up four days in drying."

Choang, who was struck with the widow's beauty, could not, however, avoid smiling at her haste to be married; but concealing the cause of his mirth, civilly invited her home, adding that he had a wife who might be capable of giving her

some consolation. As soon as he and his guest were returned he imparted to Hansi in private what he had seen, and could not avoid expressing his uneasiness that such might be his own case, if his dearest wife should one day happen to survive him.

It is impossible to describe Hansi's resentment at so unkind a suspicion. As her passion for him was not only great, but extremely delicate, she employed tears, anger, frowns, and exclamations, to chide his suspicions; the widow herself was inveighed against; and Hansi resolved never to sleep under the same roof with a wretch who, like her, could be guilty of such barefaced inconstancy. The night was cold and stormy; however, the stranger was obliged to seek another lodging, for Choang was not disposed to resist, and Hansi would have her way.

The widow had scarce been gone an hour, when a disciple of Choang's, whom he had not seen for many years, came to pay him a visit. He was received with the utmost ceremony, placed in the most honorable seat at supper, and the wine began to circulate with great freedom. Choang and Hansi exhibited open marks of mutual tenderness and unfeigned reconciliation; nothing could equal their apparent happiness; so fond a husband, so obedient a wife, few could behold without regretting their own infelicity. When, lo! their happi-

ness was at once disturbed by a most fatal accident. Choang fell lifeless in an apoplectic fit upon the floor. Every method was used, but in vain, for his recovery. Hansi was at first inconsolable for his death; after some hours, however, she found spirits to read his last will. The ensuing day she began to moralize and talk wisdom; the next day she was able to comfort the young disciple; and on the third, to shorten a long story, they both agreed to be married.

There was now no longer mourning in the apartments; the body of Choang was now thrust into an old coffin, and placed in one of the meanest rooms, there to lie unattended until the time prescribed by law for his interment. In the mean time Hansi and the young disciple were arrayed in the most magnificent habits; the bride wore in her nose a jewel of immense price, and her lover was dressed in all the finery of his former master, together with a pair of artificial whiskers that reached down to his toes. The hour of their nuptials was arrived; the whole family sympathized with their approaching happiness; the apartments were brightened up with lights that diffused the most exquisite perfume, and a lustre more bright than noonday. The lady expected her youthful lover in an inner apartment with impatience; when his servant, approaching with terror in his countenance, informed her that his master was fallen

into a fit, which would certain be mortal, unless the heart of a man lately dead could be obtained, and applied to his breast. She scarcely waited to hear the end of his story, when, tucking up her clothes, she ran with a mattock in her hand to the coffin where Choang lay, resolving to apply the heart of her dead husband as a cure for the living. She therefore struck the lid with the utmost violence. In a few blows the coffin flew open, when the body, which to all appearance had been dead, began to move. Terrified at the sight, Hansi dropped the mattock, and Choang walked out, astonished at his own situation, his wife's unusual magnificence, and her more amazing surprise. He went among the apartments, unable to conceive the cause of so much splendor. He was not long in suspense before his domestics informed him of every transaction since he first became insensible. He could scarcely believe what they told him, and went in pursuit of Hansi herself in order to receive more certain information, or to reproach her infidelity. But she prevented his reproaches; he found her weltering in blood; for she had stabbed herself to the heart, being unable to survive her shame and disappointment.

Choang, being a philosopher, was too wise to make any loud lamentations; he thought it best to bear his loss with serenity; so, mending up the old coffin where he had lain himself, he placed his

faithless spouse in his room; and unwilling that so many nuptial preparations should be expended in vain, he the same night married the widow with the large fan.

As they both were apprised of the foibles of each other beforehand, they knew how to excuse them after marriage. They lived together for many years in great tranquillity, and not expecting rapture, made a shift to find contentment. Farewell.

THE ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN METHOD OF TREATING ADULTERY

THE gentleman dressed in black, who was my companion through Westminster Abbey, came yesterday to pay me a visit; and after drinking tea we both resolved to take a walk together, in order to enjoy the freshness of the country, which now begins to resume its verdure. Before we got out of the suburbs, however, we were stopped in one of the streets by a crowd of people, gathered in a circle round a man and his wife, who seemed too loud and too angry to be understood. The people were highly pleased with the dispute, which upon inquiry we found to be between Dr. Cacafofo, an apothecary, and his wife. The doctor, it seems, coming unexpectedly into his wife's apartment, found a gentleman there, in circumstances not in the least equivocal.

The doctor, who was a person of nice honor, resolving to revenge the flagrant insult, immediately flew to the chimney-piece, and taking down a rusty blunderbuss, drew the trigger upon the defiler of his bed: the delinquent would certainly have been shot through the head, but that the piece had not been charged for many years. The gallant made a shift to escape through the window, but the lady still remained; and, as she well knew her husband's temper, undertook to manage the quarrel without a second. He was furious, and she loud; their noise had gathered all the mob who charitably assembled on the occasion, not to prevent, but to enjoy the quarrel.

"Alas!" said I to my companion, "what will become of this unhappy creature thus caught in adultery? Believe me, I pity her from my heart; her husband, I suppose, will show her no mercy. Will they burn her as in India, or behead her as in Persia? Will they load her with stripes as in Turkey, or keep her in perpetual imprisonment as with us in China? Prithee, what is the wife's punishment in England for such offences?"

"When a lady is thus caught tripping," replied my companion, "they never punish her, but the husband."

"You surely jest," interrupted I; "I am a foreigner, and you would abuse my ignorance!"

"I am really serious," returned he; "Dr. Caca-

fogo has caught his wife in the act ; but, as he had no witnesses, his small testimony goes for nothing ; the consequence, therefore, of his discovery will be, that she will be packed off to live among her relations, and the doctor must be obliged to allow her a separate maintenance."

"Amazing!" cried I ; "is it not enough that she is permitted to live separate from the object she detests, but must he give her money to keep her in spirits too?"

"That he must," said my guide, "and be called a cuckold by all his neighbors into the bargain. The men will laugh at him, the ladies will pity him ; and all that his warmest friends can say in his favor will be, that 'the poor good soul has never had any harm in him'."

"I want patience," interrupted I ; "what ! are there no private chastisements for the wife ; no schools of penitence to show her her folly ; no blows for such delinquents?"

"Pshaw, man," replied he, smiling, "if every delinquent among us were to be treated in your manner, one-half the kingdom would flog the other."

I must confess, my dear Fum, that if I were an English husband, of all things I would take care not to be jealous, nor busily pry into those secrets my wife was pleased to keep from me. Should I detect her infidelity, what is the consequence ? If I

calmly pocket the abuse, I am laughed at by her and her gallant; if I talk my griefs aloud like a tragedy hero, I am laughed at by the whole world. The course then I would take would be, whenever I went out, to tell my wife where I was going, lest I should unexpectedly meet her abroad in company with some dear deceiver. Whenever I returned, I would use a peculiar rap at the door, and give four loud hems as I walked deliberately up the staircase. I would never inquisitively peep under her bed, or look behind the curtains. And even though I knew the captain was there, I would calmly take a dish of my wife's cool tea, and talk of the army with reverence.

Of all nations the Russians seem to me to behave most wisely in such circumstances. The wife promises her husband never to let him see her transgressions of this nature; and he as punctually promises, whenever she is so detected, without the least anger, to beat her without mercy; so they both know what each has to expect; the lady transgresses, is beaten, taken again into favor, and all goes on as before.

When a Russian young lady, therefore, is to be married, her father, with a cudgel in his hand, asks the bridegroom whether he chooses this virgin for his bride; to which the other replies in the affirmative. Upon this, the father, turning the lady three times round, and giving her three strokes

with his cudgel on the back — “My dear,” cries he, “these are the last blows you are ever to receive from your tender father; I resign my authority and my cudgel to your husband; he knows better than I the use of either.” The bridegroom knows decorums too well to accept of the cudgel abruptly; he assures the father that the lady will never want it, and that he would not, for the world, make any use of it. But the father, who knows what the lady may want better than he, insists upon his acceptance; upon this there follows a scene of Russian politeness, while one refuses, and the other offers the cudgel. The whole, however, ends with the bridegroom’s taking it; upon which the lady drops a courtesy in token of obedience, and the ceremony proceeds as usual.

There is something excessively fair and open in this method of courtship; by this both sides are prepared for all the matrimonial adventures that are to follow. Marriage has been compared to a game of skill for life: it is generous thus in both parties to declare they are sharpers in the beginning. In England, I am told, both sides use every art to conceal their defects from each other before marriage, and the rest of their lives may be regarded as doing penance for their former dissimulation. Farewell.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LETTERS IN ENGLAND

THE Republic of Letters is a very common expression among the Europeans; and yet when applied to the learned of Europe is the most absurd that can be imagined, since nothing is more unlike a republic than the society which goes by that name. From this expression one would be apt to imagine that the learned were united into a single body, joining their interests and concurring in the same design. From this, one might be apt to compare them to our literary societies in China, where each acknowledges a just subordination, and all contribute to build the temple of science, without attempting, from ignorance or envy, to obstruct each other.

But very different is the state of learning here: every member of this fancied republic is desirous of governing, and none willing to obey; each looks upon his fellow as a rival, not an assistant, in the same pursuit. They calumniate, they injure, they despise, they ridicule each other; if one man writes a book that pleases, others shall write books to show that he might have given still greater pleasure, or should not have pleased. If one happens to hit upon something new, there are numbers ready to assure the public that all this was no novelty to them or the learned; that Cardanus, or Brunus, or some other author too dull to be generally read,

had anticipated the discovery. Thus, instead of uniting like the members of a commonwealth, they are divided into almost as many factions as there are men; and their jarring constitution, instead of being styled a republic of letters, should be entitled an anachy of literature.

It is true there are some of superior abilities who reverence and esteem each other; but their mutual admiration is not sufficient to shield off the contempt of the crowd. The wise are but few, and they praise with a feeble voice; the vulgar are many, and roar in reproaches. The truly great seldom unite in societies; have few meetings, no cabals; the dunces hunt in full cry till they have run down a reputation, and then snarl and fight each other about dividing the spoil. Here you may see the compilers and the book-answerers of every month, when they have cut up some respectable name, most frequently reproaching each other with stupidity and dulness; resembling the wolves of the Russian forest, who prey upon verison or horse-flesh when they can get it, but in cases of necessity lying in wait to devour each other. While they have new books to cut up they make a hearty meal; but if this resource should unhappily fail, then it is that critics eat up critics, and compilers rob from compilations.

Confucius observes that it is the duty of the learned to unite society more closely, and to per-

suade men to become citizens of the world; but the authors I refer to are not only for disuniting society but kingdoms also: if the English are at war with France, the dunces of France think it their duty to be at war with those of England. Thus Fréron, one of their first-rate scribblers, thinks proper to characterize all the English writers in the gross. "Their whole merit," says he, "consists in exaggeration and often in extravagance; correct their pieces as you please, there still remains a leaven which corrupts the whole. They sometimes discover genius, but not the smallest share of taste; England is not a soil for the plants of genius to thrive in." This is open enough, with not the least adulation in the picture; but hear what a Frenchman of acknowledged abilities says upon the same subject: "I am at a loss to determine in what we excel the English, or where they excel us; when I compare the merits of both in any one species of literary composition, so many reputable and pleasing writers present themselves from either country that my judgment rests in suspense; I am pleased with the disquisition, without finding the object of my inquiry." But lest you should think the French alone are faulty in this respect, hear how an English journalist delivers his sentiments of them. "We are amazed," says he, "to find so many works translated from the French, while we have such numbers neglected of

our own. In our opinion, notwithstanding their fame throughout the rest of Europe, the French are the most contemptible reasoners (we had almost said writers) that can be imagined. However, nevertheless, excepting," etc. Another English writer—Shaftesbury, if I remember—on the contrary, says that the French authors are pleasing and judicious, more clear, more methodical, and entertaining than those of his own country.

From these opposite pictures we perceive that the good authors of either country praise and the bad revile each other; and yet, perhaps, you will be surprised that indifferent writers should thus be the most apt to censure, as they have the most to apprehend from recrimination; you may perhaps imagine that such as are possessed of fame themselves should be most ready to declare their opinions, since what they say might pass for decision. But the truth happens to be that the great are solicitous only of raising their own reputations, while the opposite class, alas! are solicitous of bringing every reputation down to a level with their own.

But let us acquit them of malice and envy. A critic is often guided by the same motives that direct his author: the author endeavors to persuade us that he has written a good book; the critic is equally solicitous to show that he could write a better, had he thought proper. A critic is

a being possessed of all the vanity but not the genius of a scholar; incapable, from his native weakness, of lifting himself from the ground, he applies to contiguous merit for support; makes the sportive sallies of another's imagination his serious employment; pretends to take our feelings under his care; teaches where to condemn, where to lay the emphasis of praise; and may with as much justice be called a man of taste as the Chinese, who measures his wisdom by the length of his nails.

If, then, a book, spirited or humorous, happens to appear in the republic of letters, several critics are in waiting to bid the public not to laugh at a single line of it, for themselves had read it, and they know what is most proper to excite laughter. Other critics contradict the fulminations of this tribunal, call them all spiders, and assure the public that they ought to laugh without restraint. Another set are in the mean time quietly employed in writing notes to the book, intended to show the particular passages to be laughed at; when these are out, others still there are who write notes upon notes; thus a single new book employs not only the paper-makers, the printers, the pressmen, the bookbinders, the hawkers, but twenty critics, and as many compilers. In short, the body of the learned may be compared to a Persian army, where there are many pioneers, several sutlers,

numberless servants, women and children in abundance, and but few soldiers. Adieu.

THE CHINESE PHILOSOPHER GOES TO A PLAY

THE English are as fond of seeing plays acted as the Chinese; but there is a vast difference in the manner of conducting them. We play our pieces in the open air, the English theirs under cover; we act by daylight, they by the blaze of torches. One of our plays continues eight or ten days successively; an English piece seldom takes up above four hours in the representation.

My companion in black, with whom I am now beginning to contract an intimacy, introduced me a few nights ago to the play-house, where we placed ourselves conveniently at the foot of the stage. As the curtain was not drawn before my arrival, I had an opportunity of observing the behavior of the spectators, and indulging those reflections which novelty generally inspires.

The richest in general were placed in the lowest seats, and the poor was above them in degree proportioned to their poverty. The order of precedence seemed here inverted: those who were undermost all the day enjoyed a temporary eminence, and became masters of the ceremonies. It was they who called for the music, indulging every noisy freedom, and testifying all the inso-

lence of beggary in their tawdry exaltation.

They who held the middle region seemed not so riotous as those above them, nor yet so tame as those below; to judge by their looks, many of them seemed strangers there as well as myself; they were chiefly employed, during this period of expectation, in eating oranges, reading the story of the play, or making assignations.

Those who sat in the lowest rows, which are called the pit, seemed to consider themselves as judges of the merit of the poet and the performers; they were assembled partly to be amused, and partly to show their taste; appearing to labor under that restraint which an affectation of superior discernment generally produces. My companion, however, informed me that not one in a hundred of them knew even the first principles of criticism; that they assumed the right of being censors because there was none to contradict their pretensions; and that every man who now called himself a connoisseur became such to all intents and purposes.

Those who sat in boxes appeared in the most unhappy situation of all. The rest of the audience came merely for their own amusement, these rather to furnish out a part of the entertainment themselves. I could not avoid considering them as acting parts in dumb show; not a courtesy or nod that was not the result of art; not a look nor a

smile that was not designed for murder. Gentlemen and ladies ogled each other through spectacles; for my companion observed that blindness was of late become fashionable; all affected indifference and ease, while their hearts at the same time burnt for conquest. Upon the whole, the lights, the music, the ladies in their gayest dresses, the men with cheerfulness and expectation in their looks, all conspired to make a most agreeable picture, and to fill a heart that sympathizes at human happiness with an expressionable serenity.

The expected time for the play to begin at last arrived; the curtain was drawn, and the actors came on. A woman, who personated a queen, came in courtesying to the audience, who clapped their hands upon her appearance. Clapping of hands is, it seems, the manner of applauding in England; the manner is absurd, but every country, you know, has its peculiar absurdities. I was equally surprised, however, at the submission of the actress, who should have considered herself as a queen, as at the little discernment of the audience, who gave her such marks of applause before she attempted to deserve them. Preliminaries between her and the audience being thus adjusted, the dialogue was supported between her and a most hopeful youth, who acted the part of her confidant. They both appeared in extreme distress, for it

seems the queen had lost a child some fifteen years before, and still kept its dear resemblance next her heart, while her kind companion bore a part in her sorrows.

Her lamentations grew loud; comfort is offered, but she detests the very sound; she bids them preach comfort to the winds. Upon this her husband comes in, who seeing the queen so much afflicted, can himself hardly refrain from tears or avoid partaking in the soft distress. After thus grieving through three scenes, the curtain dropped for the first act.

"Truly," said I to my companion, "these kings and queens are very much disturbed at no very great misfortune. Certain I am, were people of humbler stations to act in this manner, they would be thought divested of common-sense." I had scarce finished this observation, when the curtain rose, and the king came on in a violent passion. His wife had, it seems, refused his proffered tenderness, had spurned his royal embrace; and he seemed resolved not to survive her fierce disdain. After he had thus fretted and the queen had fretted through the second act, the curtain was let down once more.

"Now," says my companion, "you perceive the king to be a man of spirit; he feels at every pore: one of your phlegmatic sons of clay would have given the queen her own way, and let her come

to herself by degrees; but the king is for immediate tenderness, or instant death: death and tenderness are leading passions of every modern buskined hero; this moment they embrace and the next stab, mixing daggers and kisses in every period."

I was going to second his remarks, when my attention was engrossed by a new object: a man came in balancing a straw upon his nose, and the audience were clapping their hands in all the raptures of applause. "To what purpose," cried I, "does this unmeaning figure make his appearance? is he a part of the plot?"

"Unmeaning do you call him?" replied my friend in black; "this is one of the most important characters of the whole play; nothing pleases the people more than the seeing a straw balanced: there is a great deal of meaning in the straw; there is something suited to every apprehension in the sight; and a fellow possessed of talents like these is sure of making his fortune."

The third act now began, with an actor who came to inform us that he was the villain of the play, and intended to show strange things before all was over. He was joined by another, who seemed as much disposed for mischief as he; their intrigues continued through this whole division. "If that be a villain," said I, "he must be a very stupid one to tell his secrets without being asked;

such soliloquies of late are never admitted in China."

The noise of clapping interrupted me once more; a child of six years old was learning to dance on the stage, which gave the ladies and mandarins infinite satisfaction. "I am sorry," said I, "to see the pretty creature so early learning so bad a trade; dancing being, I presume, as contemptible here as it is in China." Quite the reverse, interrupted my companion; dancing is a very reputable and genteel employment here; men have a greater chance for encouragement from the merit of their heels than their heads. One who jumps up and flourishes his toes three times before he comes to the ground may have three hundred a year; he who flourishes them four times gets four hundred; but he who arrives at five is inestimable, and may demand what salary he thinks proper. The female dancers, too, are valued for this sort of jumping and crossing; and it is a cant word among them, that she deserves most who shows highest. But the fourth act is begun: let us be attentive.

In the fourth act the queen finds her long lost child, now grown up into a youth of smart parts and great qualifications; wherefore she wisely considers that the crown will fit his head better than that of her husband, whom she knows to be a driveller. The king discovers her design, and

here comes on the deep distress: he loves the queen, and he loves the kingdom; he resolves therefore, in order to possess both, that her son must die. The queen exclaims at his barbarity, is frantic with rage, and at length, overcome with sorrow, falls into a fit; upon which the curtain drops, and the act is concluded.

"Observe the art of the poet," cries my companion. "When the queen can say no more she falls into a fit. While thus her eyes are shut, while she is supported in the arms of Abigail, what horrors do we not fancy! We feel it in every nerve; take my word for it that fits are the true aposiopesis of modern tragedy."

The fifth act began, and a busy piece it was. Scenes shifting, trumpets sounding, mobs hallooing, carpets spreading, guards bustling from one door to another; gods, demons, daggers, racks, and ratsbane. But whether the king was killed, or the queen was drowned, or the son was poisoned, I have absolutely forgotten.

When the play was over I could not avoid observing that the persons of the drama appeared in as much distress in the first act as the last. "How is it possible," said I, "to sympathize with them through five long acts? Pity is but a short-lived passion; I hate to hear an actor mouthing trifles; neither startings, strainings, nor attitudes affect me, unless there be cause: after I have been once

or twice deceived by those unmeaning alarms, my heart sleeps in peace, probably unaffected by the principal distress. There should be one great passion aimed at by the actor as well as the poet; all the rest should be subordinate, and only contribute to make that the greater: if the actor, therefore, exclaims upon every occasion in the tones of despair, he attempts to move us too soon; he anticipates the blow, he ceases to affect, though he gains our applause."

I scarce perceived that the audience were almost all departed; wherefore, mixing with the crowd, my companion and I got into the street, where, essaying a hundred obstacles, from coach-wheels and palanquin-poles, like birds in their flight through the branches of a forest, after various turnings, we both at length got home in safety. Adieu.

THE CHARACTER OF THE MAN IN BLACK,
WITH SOME INSTANCES OF HIS IN-
CONSISTENT CONDUCT

THOUGH fond of many acquaintances, I desire an intimacy only with a few. The man in black whom I have often mentioned is one whose friendship I could wish to acquire, because he possesses my esteem. His manners, it is true, are tinctured with some strange inconsistencies; and he may be justly termed a humorist in a nation of humorists.

Though he is generous even to profusion, he affects to be thought a prodigy of parsimony and prudence; though his conversation be replete with the most sordid and selfish maxims, his heart is dilated with the most unbounded love. I have known him profess himself a man-hater, while his cheek was glowing with compassion; and while his looks were softened into pity I have heard him use the language of the most unbounded ill-nature. Some affect humanity and tenderness, others boast of having such dispositions from nature: but he is the only man I ever knew who seemed ashamed of his natural benevolence. He takes as much pains to hide his feelings as any hypocrite would to conceal his indifference; but on every unguarded moment the mask drops off, and reveals him to the most superficial observer.

In one of our late excursions into the country, happening to discourse upon the provision that was made for the poor in England, he seemed amazed how any of his countrymen could be so foolishly weak as to relieve occasional objects of charity, when the laws had made such ample provision for their support. "In every parish-house," says he, "the poor are supplied with food, clothes, fire, and a bed to lie on; they want no more; I desire no more myself; yet still they seem discontented. I am surprised at the inactivity of our magistrates in not taking up such vagrants, who

are only a weight upon the industrious ; I am surprised that the people are found to relieve them, when they must be at the same time sensible that it in some measure encourages idleness, extravagance, and imposture. Were I to advise any man for whom I had the least regard, I would caution him by all means not to be imposed upon by their false pretences ; let me assure you, sir, they are impostors, every one of them, and rather merit a prison than relief."

He was proceeding in this strain earnestly to dissuade me from an imprudence of which I am seldom guilty, when an old man, who still had about him the remnants of tattered finery, implored our compassion. He assured us that he was no common beggar, but forced into the shameful profession to support a dying wife and five hungry children. Being prepossessed against such falsehoods, his story had not the least influence upon me ; but it was quite otherwise with the man in black : I could see it visibly operate upon his countenance, and effectually interrupt his harangue. I could easily perceive that his heart burnt to relieve the five starving children, but he seemed ashamed to discover his weakness to me. While he thus hesitated between compassion and pride, I pretended to look another way, and he seized this opportunity of giving the poor petitioner a piece of silver, bidding him at the same

time, in order that I should hear, go work for his bread, and not tease passengers with such impertinent falsehoods for the future.

As he fancied himself quite unperceived, he continued as we proceeded to rail against beggars with as much animosity as before; he threw in some episodes on his own amazing prudence and economy, with his profound skill in discovering impostors; he explained the manner in which he would deal with beggars were he a magistrate; hinted at enlarging some of the prisons for their reception, and told two stories of ladies that were robbed by beggarmen. He was beginning a third to the same purpose when a sailor with a wooden leg once more crossed our walks, desiring our pity and blessing our limbs. I was for going on without taking any notice, but my friend, looking wishfully upon the poor petitioner, bid me stop, and he would show me with how much ease he could at any time detect an impostor.

He now, therefore, assumed a look of importance, and in an angry tone began to examine the sailor, demanding in what engagement he was thus disabled and rendered unfit for service. The sailor replied, in a tone as angrily as he, that he had been an officer on board a private ship-of-war, and that he had lost his leg abroad, in defence of those who did nothing at home. At this reply all my friend's importance vanished in a moment; he had

not a single question more to ask; he now only studied what method he should take to relieve him unobserved. He had, however, no easy part to act, as he was obliged to preserve the appearance of ill-nature before me, and yet relieve himself by relieving the sailor. Casting, therefore, a furious look upon some bundles of chips which the fellow carried in a string at his back, my friend demanded how he sold his matches; but, not waiting for a reply, desired in a surly tone to have a shilling's worth. The sailor seemed at first surprised at his demand, but soon recollecting himself, and presenting his whole bundle, "Here master," says he, "take all my cargo, and a blessing into the bargain."

It is impossible to describe with what an air of triumph my friend marched off with his new purchase; he assured me that he was firmly of opinion that those fellows must have stolen their goods, who could thus afford to sell them for half value. He informed me of several different uses to which those chips might be applied; he expatiated largely upon the savings that would result from lighting candles with a match, instead of thrusting them into the fire. He averred, that he would as soon have parted with a tooth as his money to those vagabonds, unless for some valuable consideration. I cannot tell how long this panegyric upon frugality and matches might have continued,

had not his attention been called off by another object more distressful than either of the former. A woman in rags, with one child in her arms, and another on her back, was attempting to sing ballads, but with such a mournful voice that it was difficult to determine whether she was singing or crying. A wretch who, in the deepest distress, still aimed at good-humor was an object my friend was by no means capable of withstanding; his vivacity and his discourse were instantly interrupted; upon this occasion his very dissimulation had forsaken him. Even in my presence he immediately applied his hands to his pockets, in order to relieve her; but guess his confusion when he found he had already given away all the money he carried about him to former objects. The misery painted in the woman's visage was not half so strongly expressed as the agony in his. He continued to search for some time, but to no purpose, till, at length recollecting himself, with a face of ineffable good-nature, as he had no money, he put into her hands his shilling's worth of matches.

As there appeared something reluctantly good in the character of my companion, I must own it surprised me what could be his motives for thus concealing virtues which others take such pains to display. I was unable to repress my desire of knowing the history of a man who thus seemed to act under continual restraint, and whose benevo-

lence was rather the effect of appetite than reason.

It was not, however, till after repeated solicitations he thought proper to gratify my curiosity. "If you are fond," says he, "of hearing hair-breadth 'scapes, my history must certainly please; for I have been for twenty years upon the very verge of starving, without ever being starved.

"My father, the younger son of a good family, was possessed of a small living in the Church.¹ His education was above his fortune, and his generosity greater than his education. Poor as he was, he had his flatterers still poorer than himself; for every dinner he gave them they returned an equivalent in praise; and this was all he wanted. The same ambition that actuates a monarch at the head of an army influenced my father at the head of his table; he told the story of the ivy-tree, and that was laughed at; he repeated the jest of the two scholars and one pair of breeches, and the company laughed at that; but the story of Taffy in the sedan chair was sure to set the table in a roar. Thus his pleasure increased in proportion to the pleasure he gave; he loved all the world, and he fancied all the world loved him.

"As his fortune was but small, he lived up to the very extent of it; he had no intentions of leaving his children money, for that was dross; he was resolved they should have learning, for learn-

¹ In this story are portions of Goldsmith's own early history.

ing, he used to observe, was better than silver or gold. For this purpose, he undertook to instruct us himself; and took as much pains to form our morals as to improve our understanding. We were told that universal benevolence was what first cemented society; we were taught to consider all the wants of mankind as our own; to regard 'the human face divine' with affection and esteem; he wound us up to be mere machines of pity, and rendered us incapable of withstanding the slightest impulse, made either by real or fictitious distress; in a word, we were perfectly instructed in the art of giving away thousands before we were taught the more necessary qualifications of getting a farthing.

"I cannot avoid imagining that, thus refined by his lessons out of all my suspicion, and divested of even all the little cunning which nature had given me, I resembled, upon my first entrance into the busy and insidious world, one of those gladiators who were exposed without armor in the amphitheatre at Rome. My father, however, who had only seen the world on one side, seemed to triumph in my superior discernment; though my whole stock of wisdom consisted in being able to talk like himself upon subjects that once were useful, because they were then topics of the busy world, but that now were utterly useless, because connected with the busy world no longer.

“The first opportunity he had of finding his expectations disappointed was at the very middling figure I made in the university; he had flattered himself that he should soon see me rising into the foremost rank in literary reputation, but was mortified to find me utterly unnoticed and unknown. His disappointment might have been partly ascribed to his having overrated my talents, and partly to my dislike of mathematical reasonings, at a time when my imagination and memory, yet unsatisfied, were more eager after new objects than desirous of reasoning upon those I knew. This did not, however, please my tutors, who observed indeed, that I was a little dull; but at the same time allowed that I seemed to be very good-natured, and had no harm in me.

“After I had resided at college seven years, my father died, and left me — his blessing. Thus shoved from shore, without ill-nature to protect, or cunning to guide, or proper stores to subsist me in so dangerous a voyage, I was obliged to embark in the wide world at twenty-two. But, in order to settle in life, my friends advised (for they always advise when they begin to despise us) — they advised me, I say, to go into orders.

“To be obliged to wear a long wig when I liked a short one, or a black coat when I generally dressed in brown, I thought was such a restraint upon my liberty that I absolutely rejected the pro-

posal. A priest in England is not the same mortified creature with a bonze in China: with us, not he that fasts best, but eats best, is reckoned the best liver; yet I rejected a life of luxury, indolence, and ease, from no other consideration but that boyish one of dress. So that my friends were now perfectly satisfied I was undone; and yet they thought it a pity for one who had not the least harm in him, and was so very good-natured.

“Poverty naturally begets dependence, and I was admitted as flatterer to a great man. At first I was surprised that the situation of a flatterer at a great man’s table could be thought disagreeable; there was no great trouble in listening attentively when his lordship spoke, and laughing when he looked round for applause. This even good-manners might have obliged me to perform. I found, however, too soon, that his lordship was a greater dunce than myself; and from that very moment my power of flattery was at an end. I now rather aimed at setting him right than at receiving his absurdities with submission: to flatter those we do not know is an easy task; but to flatter our intimate acquaintances, all whose foibles are strongly in our eye, is drudgery insupportable. Every time I now opened my lips in praise, my falsehood went to my conscience; his lordship soon perceived me to be unfit for service; I was therefore discharged, my patron at the same time being

graciously pleased to observe that he believed I was tolerably good-natured, and had not the least harm in me.

“Disappointed in ambition, I had recourse to love. A young lady, who lived with her old aunt, and was possessed of a pretty fortune in her own disposal, had given me, as I fancied, some reasons to expect success. The symptoms by which I was guided were striking. She had always laughed with me at her awkward acquaintance, and at her aunt among the number; she always observed that a man of sense would make a better husband than a fool, and I as constantly applied the observation in my own favor. She continually talked, in my company, of friendship and the beauties of the mind, and spoke of Mr. Shrimp my rival’s high-heeled shoes with detestation. These were circumstances which I thought strongly in my favor; so after resolving and re-resolving, I had courage enough to tell her my mind. Miss heard my proposal with serenity, seeming at the same time to study the figures of her fan. Out at last it came. There was but one small objection to complete our happiness; which was no more than — that she was married three months before to Mr. Shrimp, with high-heeled shoes! By way of consolation, however, she observed that, though I was disappointed in her, my addresses to her aunt would probably kindle her into sensibility, as the old lady

always allowed me to be very good-natured, and not to have the least share of harm in me.

“Yet still I had friends, numerous friends, and to them I was resolved to apply. O friendship! thou fond soother of the human breast, to thee we fly in every calamity; to thee the wretched seek for succor; on thee the care-tired son of misery fondly relies; from thy kind assistance the unfortunate always hopes relief, and may be ever sure of — disappointment! My first application was to a City scrivener, who had frequently offered to lend me money when he knew I did not want it. I informed him that now was the time to put his friendship to the test; that I wanted to borrow a couple of hundreds for a certain occasion, and was resolved to take it up from him. ‘And pray, sir,’ cried my friend, ‘do you want all this money?’ ‘Indeed I never wanted it more,’ returned I. ‘I am sorry for that,’ cries the scrivener, ‘with all my heart; for they who want money when they come to borrow, will always want money when they should come to pay.’

“From him I flew with indignation to one of the best friends I had in the world, and made the same request. ‘Indeed, Mr. Drybone,’ cries my friend, ‘I always thought it would come to this. You know, sir, I would not advise you but for your own good; but your conduct has hitherto been ridiculous in the highest degree, and some of your

acquaintance always thought you a very silly fellow. Let me see, you want two hundred pounds. Do you want only two hundred, sir, exactly?' 'To confess a truth,' returned I, 'I shall want three hundred; but then I have another friend, from whom I can borrow the rest.' 'Why, then,' replied my friend, 'if you would take my advice (and you know I should not presume to advise you but for your own good), I would recommend it to you to borrow the whole sum from that other friend; and then one note will serve for all, you know.'

"Poverty now began to come fast upon me; yet, instead of growing more provident or cautious as I grew poor, I became every day more indolent and simple. A friend was arrested for fifty pounds; I was unable to extricate him except by becoming his bail. When at liberty he fled from his creditors, and left me to take his place. In prison I expected greater satisfactions than I had enjoyed at large. I hoped to converse with men in this new world, simple and believing like myself; but I found them as cunning and as cautious as those in the world I had left behind. They sponged up my money while it lasted, borrowed my coals and never paid for them, and cheated me when I played at cribbage. All this was done because they believed me to be very good-natured, and knew that I had no harm in me.

"Upon my first entrance into this mansion,

which is to some the abode of despair, I felt no sensations different from those I experienced abroad. I was now on one side the door, and those who were unconfined were on the other; this was all the difference between us. At first, indeed, I felt some uneasiness, in considering how I should be able to provide this week for the wants of the week ensuing; but after some time, if I found myself sure of eating one day, I never troubled my head how I was to be supplied another. I seized every precarious meal with the utmost good-humor; indulged no rants of spleen at my situation; never called down heaven and all the stars to behold me dining upon a halfpenny-worth of radishes; my very companions were taught to believe that I liked salad better than mutton. I contented myself with thinking that all my life I should either eat white bread or brown; considered that all that happened was best; laughed when I was not in pain, took the world as it went, and read Tacitus often, for want of more books and company.

“How long I might have continued in this torpid state of simplicity I cannot tell, had I not been roused by seeing an old acquaintance, whom I knew to be a prudent blockhead, preferred to a place in the Government. I now found that I had pursued a wrong track, and that the true way of being able to relieve others was first to aim at in-

dependence myself; my immediate care, therefore, was to leave my present habitation, and make an entire reformation in my conduct and behavior. For a free, open, undesigning deportment I put on that of closeness, prudence and economy. One of the most heroic actions I ever performed, and for which I shall praise myself as long as I live, was the refusing half a crown to an old acquaintance, at the time when he wanted it and I had it to spare; for this alone I deserve to be decreed an ovation.¹

"I now, therefore, pursued a course of uninterrupted frugality, seldom wanted a dinner, and was consequently invited to twenty. I soon began to get the character of a saving hunk that had money, and insensibly grew into esteem. Neighbors have asked my advice in the disposal of their daughters; and I have always taken care not to give any. I have contracted a friendship with an alderman, only by observing that if we take a farthing from a thousand pounds it will be a thousand pounds no longer. I have been invited to a pawnbroker's table by pretending to hate gravy; and am now actually upon treaty of marriage with a rich widow for only having observed that the bread was rising. If ever I am asked a question,

¹ This is, of course, pure facetiousness; anyone who knows Goldsmith's character knows that he could never have refused to relieve the distress of a friend, no matter at what cost to himself.
—H. H. H.

whether I know it or not, instead of answering, I only smile and look wise. If a charity is proposed, I go about with the hat, but put nothing in myself. If a wretch solicits my pity, I observe that the world is filled with impostors, and take a certain method of not being deceived, by never relieving. In short, I now find the truest way of finding esteem, even from the indigent, is — to give away nothing, and thus have much in our power to give.”

ON THE GREAT NUMBER OF OLD MAIDS AND
BACHELORS IN LONDON — SOME
OF THE CAUSES

LATELY in company with my friend in black, whose conversation is now both my amusement and instruction, I could not avoid observing the great numbers of old bachelors and maiden ladies with which this city seems to be overrun. “Sure, marriage,” said I, “is not sufficiently encouraged, or we should never behold such crowds of battered beaux and decayed coquettes still attempting to drive a trade they have been so long unfit for, and swarming upon the gayety of the age. I behold an old bachelor in the most contemptible light, as an animal that lives upon the common stock without contributing his share; he is a beast of prey, and the laws should make use of as many stratagems and as much force to drive the reluctant savage

into the toils as the Indians when they hunt the hyena or the rhinoceros. The mob should be permitted after him; boys might play tricks on him with impunity; every well-bred company should laugh at him; and if, when turned of sixty, he offered to make love, his mistress might spit in his face, or, what would be perhaps a greater punishment, should fairly grant him the favor.

"As for old maids," continued I, "they should not be treated with so much severity, because I suppose none would be so if they could. No lady in her senses would choose to make a subordinate figure at christenings and lyings-in, when she might be the principal herself; nor curry favor with a sister-in-law, when she might command a husband; nor toil in preparing custards, when she might lie abed and give directions how they ought to be made; nor stifle all her sensations in demure formality, when she might with matrimonial freedom shake her acquaintance by the hand, and wink at a *double entendre*. No lady could be so very silly as to live single if she could help it. I consider an unmarried lady declining into the vale of years as one of those charming countries bordering on China, that lies waste for want of proper inhabitants. We are not to accuse the country, but the ignorance of its neighbors, who are insensible of its beauties, though at liberty to enter and cultivate the soil."

"Indeed, sir," replied my companion, "you are very little acquainted with the English ladies, to think they are old maids against their will. I dare venture to affirm that you can hardly select one of them all who has not had frequent offers of marriage, which either pride or avarice has not made her reject. Instead of thinking it a disgrace, they take every occasion to boast of their former cruelty; a soldier does not exult more when he counts over the wounds he has received than a female veteran when she relates the wounds she has formerly given: exhaustless when she begins a narrative of the former death-dealing power of her eyes. She tells of the knight in gold lace, who died with a single frown, and never rose again till — he was married to his maid; of the squire who, being cruelly denied, in a rage flew to the window and, lifting up the sash, threw himself in an agony — into his arm-chair; of the parson who, crossed in love, resolutely swallowed opium, which banished the stings of despised love by — making him sleep. In short, she talks over her former losses with pleasure, and, like some tradesman, finds consolation in the many bankruptcies she has suffered.

"For this reason, whenever I see a superannuated beauty still unmarried, I tacitly accuse her either of pride, avarice, coquetry, or affectation. There's Miss Jenny Tinderbox — I once remem-

ber her to have had some beauty, and a moderate fortune. Her elder sister happened to marry a man of quality, and this seemed as a statute of virginity against poor Jane. Because there was one lucky hit in the family, she was resolved not to disgrace it by introducing a tradesman. By thus rejecting her equals, and neglected or despised by her superiors, she now acts in the capacity of tutoress to her sister's children, and undergoes the drudgery of three servants, without receiving the wages of one.

"Miss Squeeze was a pawnbroker's daughter; her father had early taught her that money was a very good thing, and left her a moderate fortune at his death. She was so perfectly sensible of the value of what she had got, that she was resolved never to part with a farthing without an equality on the part of her suitor: she thus refused several offers made her by people who wanted to better themselves, as the saying is, and grew old and ill-natured, without ever considering that she should have made an abatement in her pretensions, from her face being pale and marked with the small-pox.

"Lady Betty Tempest, on the contrary, had beauty, with fortune and family. But, fond of conquest, she passed from triumph to triumph. She had read plays and romances, and there had learned that a plain man of common-sense was no

better than a fool; such she refused, and sighed only for the gay, giddy, inconsistent, and thoughtless. After she had thus rejected hundreds who liked her, and sighed for hundreds who despised her, she found herself insensibly deserted; at present she is company only for her aunts and cousins, and sometimes makes one in a country dance, with only one of the chairs for a partner, casts off round a joint-stool, and sets to a corner cupboard. In a word, she is treated with civil contempt from every quarter, and placed, like a piece of old-fashioned lumber, merely to fill up a corner.

“But Sophronia, the sagacious Sophronia, how shall I mention her? She was taught to love Greek, and hate the men from her very infancy; she has rejected fine gentlemen because they were not pedants, and pedants because they were not fine gentlemen; her exquisite sensibility has taught her to discover every fault in every lover, and her inflexible justice has prevented her pardoning them; thus she rejected several offers, till the wrinkles of age had overtaken her; and now, without one good feature in her face, she talks incessantly of the beauties of the mind.” Farewell.

A DESCRIPTION OF A CLUB OF AUTHORS

WERE we to estimate the learning of the English by the number of books that are every day published among them, perhaps no country, not

even China itself, could equal them in this particular. I have reckoned not less than twenty-three new books published in one day; which upon computation makes eight thousand three hundred and ninety-five in one year. Most of these are not confined to one single science, but embrace the whole circle. History, politics, poetry, mathematics, metaphysics, and the philosophy of nature, are all comprised in a manual not larger than that in which our children are taught the letters. If, then, we suppose the learned of England to read but an eighth part of the works which daily come from the press — and sure none can pretend to learning upon less easy terms — at this rate every scholar will read a thousand books in one year. From such a calculation you may conjecture what an amazing fund of literature a man must be possessed of who thus reads three new books every day, not one of which but contains all the good things that ever were said or written.

And yet I know not how it happens, but the English are not in reality so learned as would seem from this calculation. We meet but few who know all arts and sciences to perfection; whether it is that the generality are incapable of such extensive knowledge, or that the authors of those books are not adequate instructors. In China, the emperor himself takes cognizance of all the doc-

tors in the kingdom who profess authorship.¹ In England, every man may be an author that can write; for they have by law a liberty not only of saying what they please, but of being also as dull as they please.

Yesterday I testified my surprise to the man in black, where writers could be found in sufficient number to throw off the books I daily saw crowding from the press. I at first imagined that their learned seminaries might take this method of instructing the world. But to obviate this objection, my companion assured me, that the doctors of colleges never wrote, and that some of them had actually forgotten their reading. "But if you desire," continued he, "to see a collection of authors, I fancy I can introduce you this evening to a club, which assembles every Saturday at seven, at the sign of 'The Broom,' near Islington,² to talk over

¹ "One of the most remarkable national peculiarities of China is their extraordinary addiction to letters, and the very honorable pre-eminence which, from the most remote period, has been universally conceded to that class which is exclusively devoted to literary pursuits. Everything that is subservient to, or connected with, literary objects in China is carried to a degree of refinement, and blended with all their ordinary concerns of pleasure and of business, in a way that may seem extravagant and puerile. Their customary reverence for letters is such that they will not tread upon written or printed paper." — Sir GEORGE STAUNTON'S *Miscellaneous Notices*.

² Islington was one of Goldsmith's frequent resorts and occasional residences. Some of the supposed authors in this and the succeeding letter were no doubt real characters.

the business of the last and the entertainment of the week ensuing." I accepted his invitation; we walked together, and entered the house some time before the usual hour for the company assembling.

My friend took this opportunity of letting me into the characters of the principal members of the club, not even the host excepted — who, it seems, was once an author himself, but preferred by a bookseller to this situation as a reward for his former services.

"The first person," said he, "of our society is Doctor Nonentity, a metaphysician. Most people think him a profound scholar; but as he seldom speaks, I cannot be positive in that particular; he generally spreads himself before the fire, sucks his pipe, talks little, drinks much, and is reckoned very good company. I'm told he writes indexes to perfection; he makes essays on the origin of evil, philosophical inquiries upon any subject, and draws up an answer to any book upon twenty-four hours' warning. You may distinguish him from the rest of the company by his long gray wig, and the blue handkerchief round his neck."

"The next to him in merit and esteem is Tim Syllabub, a droll creature; he sometimes shines as a star of the first magnitude among the choice spirits of the age; he is reckoned equally excellent at a rebus, a riddle, a bawdy song, and a hymn for the Tabernacle. You will know him by his

shabby finery, his powdered wig, dirty shirt, and broken silk stockings.

"After him succeeds Mr. Tibbs, a very useful hand; he writes receipts for the bite of a mad dog, and throws off an Eastern tale to perfection; he understands the business of an author as well as any man, for no bookseller alive can cheat him. You may distinguish him by the peculiar clumsiness of his figure and the coarseness of his coat; however, though it be coarse (as he frequently tells the company), he has paid for it.

"Lawyer Squint is the politician of the society; he makes speeches for Parliament, writes addresses to his fellow-subjects, and letters to noble commanders; he gives the history of every new play, and finds 'seasonable thoughts' upon every occasion." My companion was proceeding in his description, when the host came running in, with terror on his countenance, to tell us that the door was beset with bailiffs. "If that be the case, then," says my companion, "we had as good be going; for I am positive we shall not see one of the company this night." Wherefore, disappointed, we were both obliged to return home: he to enjoy the oddities which compose his character alone, and I to write as usual to my friend the occurrences of the day. Adieu.

THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB OF AUTHORS

By my last advices from Moscow I find the caravan has not yet departed for China. I still continue to write, expecting that you may receive a large number of my letters at once. In them you will find rather a minute detail of English peculiarities, than a general picture of their manners or disposition. Happy it were for mankind if all travellers would thus, instead of characterizing a people in general terms, lead us into a detail of those minute circumstances which first influenced their opinion. The genius of a country should be investigated with a kind of experimental inquiry; by this means we should have more precise and just notions of foreign nations, and detect travellers themselves when they happened to form wrong conclusions.

My friend and I repeated our visit to the club of authors; where, upon our entrance, we found the members all assembled and engaged in a loud debate.

The poet, in shabby finery, holding a manuscript in his hand, was earnestly endeavoring to persuade the company to hear him read the first book of an heroic poem which he had composed the day before. But against this all the members very warmly objected. They knew no reason why any member of the club should be indulged with a

particular hearing, when many of them had published whole volumes which had never been looked in. They insisted that the law should be observed, where reading in company was expressly noticed. It was in vain that the plaintiff pleaded the peculiar merit of his piece: he spoke to an assembly insensible to all his remonstrances; the book of laws was opened, and read by the secretary, where it was expressly enacted, "That whatsoever poet, speech-maker, critic, or historian should presume to engage the company by reading his own works, he was to lay down sixpence previous to opening the manuscript, and should be charged one shilling an hour while he continued reading: the said shilling to be equally distributed among the company as a recompense for their trouble."

Our poet seemed at first to shrink at the penalty, hesitating for some time whether he should deposit the fine, or shut up the poem; but looking round, and perceiving two strangers in the room, his love of fame outweighed his prudence, and laying down the sum by law established, he insisted on his prerogative.

A profound silence ensuing, he began by explaining his design. "Gentlemen," says he, "the present piece is not one of your common epic poems, which come from the press like paper kites in summer; there are none of your Turnuses or Didos in it; it is an heroical description of Nature.

I only beg you'll endeavor to make your souls unison with mine, and hear with the same enthusiasm with which I have written. The poem begins with the description of an author's bedchamber; the picture was sketched in my own apartment, for you must know, gentlemen, that I am myself the hero." Then putting himself into the attitude of an orator, with all the emphasis of voice and action, he proceeded: —

Where the Red Lion flaring o'er the way
Invites each passing stranger that can pay;
Where Calvert's butt, and Parson's black champagne,
Regale the drabs and bloods of Drury Lane;
There in a lonely room, from bailiffs snug,
The muse found Scrogen stretch'd beneath a rug.
A window patch'd with paper lent a ray,
That dimly show'd the state in which he lay:
The sanded floor that grits beneath the tread;
The humid wall with paltry pictures spread;
The royal game of goose was there in view,
And the twelve rules the royal martyr drew;
The seasons fram'd with listing found a place,
And brave Prince William show'd his lamp-black face:
The morn was cold: he views with keen desire
The rusty grate, unconscious of a fire;
With beer and milk arrears the frieze was scored,
And five crack'd teacups dress'd the chimney-board;
A nightcap deck'd his brows instead of bay,
A cap by night — a stocking all the day!

With this last line he seemed so much elated that he was unable to proceed. "There, gentle-

men," cries he — "there is a description for you; Rabelais's bed-chamber is but a fool to it.

A cap by night — a stocking all the day! — there is sound and sense, and truth and nature in the trifling compass of ten little syllables."

He was too much employed in self-admiration to observe the company; who, by nods, winks, shrugs, and stifled laughter, testified every mark of contempt. He turned severally to each for their opinion, and found all, however, ready to applaud. One swore it was inimitable; another said it was damn'd fine; and a third cried out in a rapture, "Carissimo!" At last, addressing himself to the president, "And pray, Mr. Squint," says he, "let us have your opinion."

"Mine!" answered the president, taking the manuscript out of the author's hand — "may this glass suffocate me, but I think it equal to anything I have seen; and I fancy," continued he, doubling up the poem, and forcing it into the author's pocket, "that you will get great honor when it comes out; so I shall beg leave to put it in. We will not intrude upon your good-nature, in desiring to hear more of it at present; *ex ungue Herculem*, we are satisfied, perfectly satisfied." The author made two or three attempts to pull it out a second time, and the president made as many to prevent him. Thus, though with reluctance, he was at last obliged to sit down, contented with

the commendations for which he had amply paid.

When this tempest of poetry and praise was blown over, one of the company changed the subject, by wondering how any man could be so dull as to write poetry at present, since prose itself would hardly pay. "Would you think it, gentlemen?" continued he, "I have actually written last week sixteen prayers, twelve bawdy jests, and three sermons, all at the rate of sixpence apiece; and what is still more extraordinary, the bookseller has lost by the bargain. Such sermons would once have gained me a prebend's stall; but now, alas! we have neither piety, taste, nor humor among us. Positively, if this season does not turn out better than it has begun, unless the ministry commit some blunders to furnish us with a new topic of abuse, I shall resume my old business of working at the press, instead of finding it employment."

The whole club seemed to join in condemning the season, as one of the worst that had come for some time; a gentleman particularly observed that the nobility were never known to subscribe worse than at present. "I know not how it happens," said he; "though I follow them up as close as possible yet I can hardly get a single subscription in a week. The houses of the great are as inaccessible as a frontier garrison at midnight. I never see a nobleman's door half-opened that some surly

porter or footman does not stand full in the breach. I was yesterday to wait with a subscription-proposal upon my Lord Squash, the creolian. I had posted myself at his door the whole morning, and just as he was getting into his coach thrust my proposal snug into his hand, folded up in the form of a letter from myself. He just glanced at the superscription, and not knowing the hand, consigned it to his valet-de-chambre; this respectable personage treated it as his master, and put it into the hands of the porter; the porter grasped my proposal frowning; and measuring my figure from top to toe, put it back into my own hands unopened."

"To the devil I pitch all the nobility!" cries a little man, in a peculiar accent; "I am sure they have of late used me most scurvily. You must know, gentlemen, some time ago, upon the arrival of a certain noble duke from his travels, I set myself down, and vamped up a fine, flaunting poetical panegyric, which I had written in such a strain that I fancied it would have even wheedled milk from a mouse. In this I represented the whole kingdom welcoming his grace to his native soil, not forgetting the loss France and Italy would sustain in their arts by his departure. I expected to touch for a bank-bill at least; so folding up my verses in gilt paper, I gave my last half-crown to a genteel servant to be the bearer. My letter was

safely conveyed to his grace, and the servant, after four hours' absence, during which time I led the life of a fiend, returned with a letter four times as big as mine. Guess my ecstasy at the prospect of so fine a return. I eagerly took the packet into my hands, that trembled to receive it. I kept it some time unopened before me, brooding over the expected treasure it contained; when, opening it, as I hope to be saved, gentlemen, his grace had sent me in payment for my poem, no bank-bills, but six copies of verse, each longer than mine, addressed to him upon the same occasion."

"A nobleman," cries a member who had hitherto been silent, "is created as much for the confusion of us authors as the catchpoll. I'll tell you a story, gentlemen, which is as true as that this pipe is made of clay. When I was delivered of my first book, I owed my tailor for a suit of clothes; but that is nothing new, you know, and may be any man's case as well as mine. Well, owing him for a suit of clothes, and hearing that my book took very well, he sent for his money, and insisted upon being paid immediately; though I was at that time rich in fame, for my book ran like wildfire, yet I was very short in money, and being unable to satisfy his demands, prudently resolved to keep my chamber, preferring a prison of my own choosing at home to one of my tailor's

choosing abroad. In vain the bailiffs used all their arts to decoy me from my citadel; in vain they sent to let me know that a gentleman wanted to speak with me at the next tavern; in vain they came with an urgent message from my aunt in the country; in vain I was told that a particular friend was at the point of death, and desired to take his last farewell; I was deaf, insensible, rock, adamant; the bailiffs could make no impression on my hard heart, for I effectually kept my liberty by never stirring out of the room.

“This was very well for a fortnight; when one morning I received a most splendid message from the Earl of Doomsday, importing that he had read my book, and was in raptures with every line of it; he impatiently longed to see the author, and had some designs which might turn out greatly to my advantage. I paused upon the contents of this message, and found there could be no deceit, for the card was gilt at the edges, and the bearer, I was told, had quite the looks of a gentleman. Witness, ye powers, how my heart triumphed at my own importance! I saw a long perspective of felicity before me; I applauded the taste of the times, which never saw genius forsaken; I had prepared a set introductory speech for the occasion, five glaring compliments for his lordship, and two more modest for myself. The next morning, therefore, in order to be punctual

to my appointment, I took coach, and ordered the fellow to drive to the street and house mentioned in his lordship's address. I had the precaution to pull up the window as I went along to keep off the busy part of mankind, and, big with expectation, fancied the coach never went fast enough. At length, however, the wished-for moment of its stopping arrived; this for some time I impatiently expected, and letting down the window in a transport, in order to take a previous view of his lordship's magnificent palace and situation, I found — poison to my sight! I found myself, not in an elegant street, but a paltry lane; not at a nobleman's door, but the door of a jail, and I saw the bailiff, with a devil's face, coming out to secure me."

To a philosopher no circumstance, however trifling, is too minute; he finds instruction and entertainment in occurrences which are passed over by the rest of mankind as low, trite, and indifferent; it is from the number of these particulars, which to many appear insignificant, that he is at last enabled to form general conclusions. This, therefore, must be my excuse for sending so far as China accounts of manners and follies which, though minute in their own nature, serve more truly to characterize this people than histories of their public treaties, courts, ministers, negotiations, and ambassadors. Adieu.

OF THE DEGENERACY OF SOME OF THE ENGLISH NOBILITY — A MUSHROOM FEAST AMONG THE TARTARS

IN a late excursion with my friend into the country, a gentleman with a blue ribbon tied round his shoulder, and in a chariot drawn by six horses, passed swiftly by us, attended with a numerous train of captains, lackeys, and coaches filled with women. When we were recovered from the dust raised by this cavalcade, and could continue our discourse without danger of suffocation, I observed to my companion that all this state and equipage, which he seemed to despise, would in China be regarded with the utmost reverence, because such distinctions were always the reward of merit; the greatness of a mandarin's retinue being a most certain mark of the superiority of his abilities or virtue.

"The gentleman who has now passed us," replied my companion, "has no claims from his own merit to distinction; he is possessed neither of abilities nor virtue; it is enough for him that one of his ancestors was possessed of these qualities two hundred years before him. There was a time, indeed, when his family deserved their titles, but they are long since degenerated, and his ancestors for more than a century have been more and more solicitous to keep up the breed of their dogs and horses than that of their children. This very

nobleman, simple as he seems, is descended from a race of statesmen and heroes; but, unluckily, his great-grandfather marrying a cook-maid, and she having a trifling passion for his lordship's groom, they somehow crossed the strain, and produced an heir who took after his mother in his great love to good eating, and his father in a violent affection for horse-flesh. These passions have for some generations passed on from father to son, and are now become the characteristics of the family, his present lordship being equally remarkable for his kitchen and his stable."

"But such a nobleman," cried I, "deserves our pity, thus placed in so high a sphere of life, which only the more exposes to contempt. A king may confer titles, but it is personal merit alone that insures respect. I suppose," added I, "that such men are despised by their equals, neglected by their inferiors, and condemned to live among involuntary dependents in irksome solitude?"

"You are still under a mistake," replied my companion, "for, though this nobleman is a stranger to generosity, though he takes twenty opportunities in a day of letting his guests know how much he despises them; though he is possessed neither of taste, wit, nor wisdom; though incapable of improving others by his conversation, and never known to enrich any by his bounty, yet for all this his company is eagerly sought after;

he is a lord, and that is as much as most people desire in a companion. Quality and title have such allurements that hundreds are ready to give up all their own importance, to cringe, to flatter, to look little, and to pall every pleasure in constraint, merely to be among the great, though without the least hopes of improving their understanding or sharing their generosity; they might be happy among their equals, but those are despised for company, where they are despised in turn. You saw what a crowd of humble cousins, card-ruined beaux, and captains on half-pay were willing to make up this great man's retinue down to his country-seat. Not one of all these that could not lead a more comfortable life at home in their little lodging of three shillings a week, with their lukewarm dinner, served up between two pewter plates from a cook's-shop. Yet, poor devils! they are willing to undergo the impertinence and pride of their entertainer merely to be thought to live among the great; they are willing to pass the summer in bondage, though conscious they are taken down only to approve his lordship's taste upon every occasion, to tag all his stupid observations with a *very true*, to praise his stable, and descant upon his claret and cookery."

"The pitiful humiliations of the gentlemen you are now describing," said I, "puts me in mind of a custom among the Tartars of Koreki not entirely

dissimilar to this we are now considering. The Russians, who trade with them, carry thither a kind of mushrooms, which they exchange for furs of squirrels, ermines, sables, and foxes. These mushrooms the rich Tartars lay up in large quantities for the winter, and when a nobleman makes a mushroom feast all the neighbors around are invited. The mushrooms are prepared by boiling, by which the water acquires an intoxicating quality, and is a sort of drink which the Tartars prize beyond all other. When the nobility and ladies are assembled, and the ceremonies usual between people of distinction over, the mushroom-broth goes freely round; they laugh, talk *double entendre*, grow fuddled, and become excellent company. The poorer sort, who love mushroom-broth to distraction as well as the rich, but cannot afford it at the first hand, post themselves on these occasions round the huts of the rich, and watch the opportunity of the ladies and gentlemen as they come down to pass their liquor; and, holding a wooden bowl, catch the delicious fluid, very little altered by filtration, being still strongly tintured with the intoxicating quality. Of this they drink with the utmost satisfaction, and thus they get as drunk and as jovial as their betters."

"Happy nobility!" cries my companion, "who can fear no diminution of respect, unless by being seized with stranguary, and who when most drunk

are most useful! Though we have not this custom among us, I foresee that if it were introduced we might have many a toad-eater in England ready to drink from the wooden bowl on these occasions, and to praise the flavor of his lordship's liquor. As we have different classes of gentry, who knows but we may see a lord holding the bowl to a minister, a knight holding it to his lordship, and a simple squire drinking it double distilled from the loins of knighthood? For my part, I shall never for the future hear a great man's flatterers haranguing in his praise that I shall not fancy I behold the wooden bowl; for I can see no reason why a man who can live easily and happily at home should bear the drudgery of decorum and the impertinence of his entertainer, unless intoxicated with a passion for all that was quality; unless he thought that whatever came from the great was delicious, and had the tincture of the mushroom in it." Adieu.

THE CHINESE PHILOSOPHER PRAISES THE
JUSTICE OF A LATE BRITISH SENTENCE

[*From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam*]

WHEN Parmenio, the Grecian, had done something which excited a universal shout from the surrounding multitude, he was instantly struck with the doubt that what had their approbation must certainly be wrong; and, turning to a phil-

osopher who stood near him, "Pray, sir," says he, "pardon me; I fear I have been guilty of some absurdity."

You know that I am not less than him a despiser of the multitude; you know that I equally detest flattery to the great; yet so many circumstances have concurred to give a lustre to the latter part of the present English monarch's reign, that I cannot withhold my contribution of praise; I cannot avoid acknowledging the crowd, for once, just in their unanimous approbation.

Yet think not the battles gained, dominion extended, or enemies brought to submission are the virtues which at present claim my admiration. Were the reigning monarch only famous for his victories, I should regard his character with indifference; the boast of heroism in this enlightened age is justly regarded as a qualification of a very subordinate rank, and mankind now begin to look with becoming horror on these foes to man. The virtue in this aged monarch, which I have at present in view, is one of a much more exalted nature, is one of the most difficult of attainment, is the least praised, of all kingly virtues, and yet deserves the greatest praise: the virtue I mean is justice — a strict administration of justice, without severity and without favor.

Of all virtues this is the most difficult to be practised by a king who has a power to pardon.

All men, even tyrants themselves, lean to mercy when unbiassed by passions or interest; the heart naturally persuades to forgiveness, and, pursuing the dictates of this pleasing deceiver, we are led to prefer our private satisfaction to public utility. What a thorough love for the public, what a strong command over the passions, what a finely-conducted judgment must he possess, who opposes the dictates of reason to those of his heart, and prefers the future interest of his people to his own immediate satisfaction!

If still, to a man's own natural bias for tenderness, we add the numerous solicitations made by a criminal's friends for mercy; if we survey a king not only opposing his own feelings, but reluctantly refusing those he regards, and this to satisfy the public, whose cries he may never hear, whose gratitude he may never receive — this surely is true greatness! Let us fancy ourselves for a moment in this just old man's place, surrounded by numbers, all soliciting the same favor, a favor that nature disposes us to grant, where the inducements to pity are laid before us in the strongest light, suppliants at our feet, some ready to resent a refusal, none opposing a compliance; let us, I say, suppose ourselves in such a situation, and I fancy we should find ourselves more apt to act the character of good-natured men than of upright magistrates.

What contributes to raise justice above all other kindly virtues is, that it is seldom attended with a due share of applause, and those who practise it must be influenced by greater motives than empty fame: the people are generally well pleased with a remission of punishment, and all that wears the appearance of humanity; it is the wise alone who are capable of discerning that impartial justice is the truest mercy; they know it to be very difficult at once to compassionate and yet condemn an object that pleads for tenderness.

I have been led into this commonplace train of thought by a late striking instance in this country of the impartiality of justice, and of the king's inflexible resolution of inflicting punishment where it was justly due.¹ A man of the first quality,² in a fit either of passion, melancholy, or madness, murdered his servant: it was expected that his station in life would have lessened the ignominy of his punishment; however, he was arraigned, condemned, and underwent the same degrading death with the meanest malefactor. It was well considered that virtue alone is true no-

¹ A case of striking similitude was that in which Governor Fuller of Massachusetts, was lately called upon to decide the fate of two condemned men.

² Earl Ferrers, hanged at Tayburn, 5th May, 1760, for murdering his steward. "Two petitions from the earl's mother and all his family were presented to the king; who said, as the House of Lords had unanimously found him guilty, he would not interfere." — HORACE WALPOLE to *Sir Horace Mann*.

bility; and that he whose actions sink him even beneath the vulgar has no right to those distinctions which should be the rewards only of merit: it was, perhaps, considered that crimes were more heinous among the higher classes of people, as necessity exposes them to fewer temptations.

Over all the East, even China not excepted, a person of the same quality guilty of such a crime might, by giving up a share of his fortune to the judge, buy off his sentence. There are several countries, even in Europe, where the servant is entirely the property of his master: if a slave kills his lord, he dies by the most excruciating tortures; but if the circumstances are reversed, a small fine buys off the punishment of the offender. Happy the country where all are equal, and where those who sit as judges have too much integrity to receive a bribe, and too much honor to pity, from a similitude of the prisoner's title or circumstances with their own! Such is England; yet think not that it was always equally famed for this strict impartiality. There was a time, even here, when title softened the rigors of the law, when dignified wretches were suffered to live, and continue for years an equal disgrace to justice and nobility.

To this day, in a neighboring country, the great are often most scandalously pardoned for the most scandalous offences. A person is still alive among

them who has more than once deserved the most ignominious severity of justice.¹ His being of the blood royal, however, was thought a sufficient atonement for his being a disgrace to humanity. This remarkable personage took pleasure in shooting at the passengers below, from the top of his palace; and in this most princely amusement he usually spent some time every day. He was at length arraigned by the friends of a person whom in this manner he had killed, and was found guilty of the charge, and condemned to die. His merciful monarch pardoned him in consideration of his rank and quality. The unrepenting criminal soon after renewed his usual entertainment, and in the same manner killed another man. He was a second time condemned; and strange to think, a second time received his majesty's pardon! Would you believe it? A third time the very same man was guilty of the very same offence; a third time, therefore, the laws of his country found him guilty — I wish for the honor of humanity I could suppress the rest — a third time he was pardoned! Will you not think such a story too extraordinary for belief? will you not think me describing the savage inhabitants of Congo? Alas! the story is but too true, and the country where it was transacted regards itself as the politest in Europe! Adieu.

¹ The Prince of Charolais.

THE ENGLISH STILL HAVE POETS, THOUGH
NOT VERSIFIERS

YOU have always testified the highest esteem for the English poets, and thought them not inferior to the Greeks, Romans, or even the Chinese in the art. But it is now thought even by the English themselves that the race of their poets is extinct; every day produces some pathetic exclamation upon the decadence of taste and genius. Pegasus, say they, has slipped the bridle from his mouth, and our modern bards attempt to direct his flight by catching him by the tail.

Yet, my friend, it is only among the ignorant that such discourses prevail; men of true discernment can see several poets still among the English, some of whom equal if not surpass their predecessors. The ignorant term that alone poetry which is couched in a certain number of syllables in every line, where a vapid thought is drawn out into a number of verses of equal length, and perhaps pointed with rhymes at the end. But glowing sentiment, striking imagery, concise expression, natural description, and modulated periods, are fully sufficient entirely to fill up my idea of this art, and make way to every passion.

If my idea of poetry, therefore, be just, the English are not at present so destitute of poetical merit as they seem to imagine. I can see several poets in disguise among them; men furnished with that

strength of soul, sublimity of sentiment, and grandeur of expression, which constitutes the character. Many of the writers of their modern odes, sonnets, tragedies, or rebuses, it is true, deserve not the name, though they have done nothing but clink rhymes and measure syllables for years together; their Johnsons and Smollets are truly poets; though for aught I know they never made a single verse in their whole lives.

In every incipient language the poet and the prose writer are very distinct in their qualifications; the poet ever proceeds first — treading unbeaten paths, enriching his native funds, and employed in new adventures. The other follows with more cautious steps, and though slow in his motions, treasures up every useful or pleasing discovery. But when once all the extent and the force of the language is known, the poet then seems to rest from his labor, and is at length overtaken by his assiduous pursuer. Both characters are then blended into one; the historian and orator catch all the poet's fire, and leave him no real mark of distinction, except the iteration of numbers regularly returning. Thus, in the decline of ancient European learning, Seneca, though he wrote in prose, is as much a poet as Lucan; and Longinus, though but a critic, more sublime than Apollonius.

From this, then it appears that poetry is not discontinued, but altered among the English at pres-

ent; the outward form seems different from what it was, but poetry still continues internally the same: the only question remains, whether the metric feet used by the good writers of the last age, or the prosaic numbers employed by the good writers of this, be preferable? And here the practice of the last age appears to me superior: they submitted to the restraint of numbers and similar sounds; and this restraint, instead of diminishing, augmented the force of their sentiment and style. Fancy restrained may be compared to a fountain which plays highest by diminishing the aperture. Of the truth of this maxim in every language, every fine writer is perfectly sensible from his own experience, and yet to explain the reason would be perhaps as difficult as to make a frigid genius profit by the discovery.

There is still another reason in favor of the practice of the last age, to be drawn from the variety of modulation. The musical period in prose is confined to a very few changes; the numbers in verse are capable of infinite variation. I speak not now from the practice of modern verse-writers, few of whom have any idea of musical variety, but run on in the same monotonous flow through the whole poem, but rather I draw from the example of their former poets, who were tolerable masters of this variety, and also from a capacity in the language of still admitting various unanticipated music.

Several rules have been drawn up for varying the poetic measure, and critics have elaborately talked of accents and syllables; but good-sense, and a fine ear which rules can never teach, are what alone can in such a case determine. The rapturous flowings of joy, or the interruptions of indignation, require accents placed entirely different, and a structure consonant to the emotions they would express. Changing passions, and numbers changing with those passions, make the whole secret of Western as well as Eastern poetry. In a word, the great faults of the modern professed English poets are, that they seem to want numbers which should vary with the passion, and are more employed in describing to the imagination than striking at the heart. Adieu.

THE BEHAVIOR OF THE CONGREGATION IN ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL AT PRAYERS

SOME time since I sent thee, O holy disciple of Confucius, an account of the grand abbey or mausoleum of the kings and heroes of this nation. I have since been introduced to a temple not so ancient, but far superior in beauty and magnificence. In this, which is the most considerable of the empire, there are no pompous inscriptions, no flattery paid the dead, but all is elegant and awfully simple. There are, however, a few rags hung

round the walls, which have, at a vast expense, been taken from the enemy in the present war. The silk of which they are composed, when new, might be valued at half a string of copper money in China; yet this wise people fitted out a fleet and an army in order to seize them; though now grown old, and scarcely capable of being patched up into a handkerchief. By this conquest the English are said to have gained, and the French to have lost, much honor. Is the honor of European nations placed only in tattered silk?

In this temple I was permitted to remain during the whole service; and were you not already acquainted with the religion of the English, you might, from my description, be inclined to believe them as grossly idolatrous as the disciples of Lao. The idol which they seem to address strides like a colossus over the door of the inner temple, which here, as with the Jews, is esteemed the most sacred part of the building. Its oracles are delivered in a hundred various tones, which seem to inspire the worshippers with enthusiasm and awe: an old woman, who appeared to be the priestess, was employed in various attitudes, as she felt the inspiration. When it began to speak all the people remained fixed in silent attention, nodding assent, looking approbation, appearing highly edified by those sounds which, to a stranger, might seem inarticulate and unmeaning.

When the idol had done speaking, and the priestess had locked up its lungs with a key, observing almost all the company leaving the temple, I concluded the service was over, and taking my hat, was going to walk away with the crowd, when I was stopped by the man in black, who assured me that the ceremony had scarcely yet begun. "What!" cried I, "do I not see almost the whole body of the worshippers leaving the church? Would you persuade me that such numbers who profess religion and morality would, in this shameless manner, quit the temple before the service was concluded? You surely mistake: not even the Kalmouks would be guilty of such an indecency, though all the object of their worship was but a joint-stool." My friend seemed to blush for his countrymen, assuring me that those whom I saw running away were only a parcel of musical blockheads, whose passion was merely for sounds, and whose heads were as empty as a fiddle-case. "Those who remain behind," says he, "are the true religious; they make use of music to warm their hearts, and to lift them to a proper pitch of rapture: examine their behavior, and you will confess there are some among us who practise true devotion."

I now looked round me as he directed, but saw nothing of that fervent devotion which he had promised: one of the worshippers appeared to be

ogling the company through a glass; another was fervent, not in addresses to Heaven, but to his mistress; a third whispered, a fourth took snuff, and the priest himself, in a drowsy tone, read over the *duties* of the day.

"Bless my eyes!" cried I, as I happened to look toward the door, "what do I see? one of the worshippers fallen fast asleep, and actually sunk down on this cushion! He is now enjoying the benefit of a trance; or does he receive the influence of some mysterious vision?"

"Alas! alas!" replied my companion, "no such thing; he has only had the misfortune of eating too hearty a dinner, and finds it impossible to keep his eyes open." Turning to another part of the temple, I perceived a young lady just in the same circumstances and attitude. "Strange," cried I; "can she too have overeaten herself?"

"Oh, fie!" replied my friend, "you now grow censorious. She grow drowsy from eating too much! that would be profanation. She only sleeps now from having sat up all night at a brag party."

"Turn me where I will, then," says I, "I can perceive no single symptom of devotion among the worshippers, except from that old woman in the corner, who sits groaning behind the long sticks of a mourning fan; she indeed seems greatly edified with what she hears."

“Ay,” replied my friend, “I knew we should find some to catch you; I know her; that is the deaf lady who lives in the cloisters.”

In short, the remissness of behavior in almost all the worshippers, and some even of the guardians, struck me with surprise; I had been taught to believe that none were ever promoted to offices in the temple but men remarkable for their superior sanctity, learning, and rectitude; that there was no such thing heard of as persons being introduced into the church merely to oblige a senator, or provide for the younger branch of a noble family; I expected, as their minds were continually set upon heavenly things, to see their eyes directed there also, and hoped from their behavior to perceive their inclinations corresponding with their duty. But I am since informed that some are appointed to preside over temples they never visit; and, while they receive all the money, are contented with letting others do all the good. Adieu.

THE HISTORY OF CHINA MORE REplete
WITH GREAT ACTIONS THAN THAT
OF EUROPE

[*From Fum Hoam to Lien Chi Altangi*]

MUST I ever continue to condemn thy perseverance, and blame that curiosity which destroys thy happiness? What yet untasted banquet, what luxury yet unknown, has rewarded thy painful ad-

ventures? Name a pleasure which thy native country could not amply procure; frame a wish that might not have been satisfied in China. Why then such toil, and such danger, in pursuit of raptures within your reach at home?

The Europeans, you will say, excel us in sciences and in arts — those sciences which bound the aspiring wish, and those arts which tend to gratify even unrestrained desire. They may, perhaps, outdo us in the arts of building ships, casting cannons, or measuring mountains; but are they superior in the greatest of all arts, the art of governing kingdoms and ourselves?

When I compare the history of China with that of Europe, how do I exult in being a native of that kingdom which derives its original from the sun! Upon opening the Chinese history, I there behold an ancient extended empire, established by laws which nature and reason seem to have dictated. The duty of children to their parents, a duty which nature implants in every breast, forms the strength of that government which has subsisted for time immemorial. Filial obedience is the first and greatest requisite of a state; by this we become good subjects to our emperors, capable of behaving with just subordination to our superiors, and grateful dependents on heaven; by this we become fonder of marriage, in order to be capable of exacting obedience from others in our turn; by

this we become good magistrates, for early submission is the truest lesson to those who would learn to rule. By this the whole state may be said to resemble one family, of which the emperor is the protector, father, and friend.

In this happy region, sequestered from the rest of mankind, I see a succession of princes who in general considered themselves as the fathers of their people; a race of philosophers who bravely combated idolatry, prejudice, and tyranny, at the expense of their private happiness and immediate reputation. Whenever a usurper or a tyrant intruded into the administration, how have all the good and great been united against him! Can European history produce an instance like that of the twelve mandarins, who all resolved to apprise the vicious emperor Tisiang of the irregularity of his conduct? He who first undertook the dangerous task was cut in two by the emperor's order; the second was ordered to be tormented, and then put to a cruel death; the third undertook the task with intrepidity, and was instantly stabbed by the tyrant's hand; in this manner they all suffered, except one. But, not to be turned from his purpose, the brave survivor entering the palace with the instruments of torture in his hand, "Here," cried he, addressing himself to the throne, "here, O Tisiang, are the marks your faithful subjects receive for their loyalty. I am wearied with serving

a tyrant, and now come for my reward." The emperor, struck with his intrepidity, instantly forgave the boldness of his conduct, and reformed his own. What European annals can boast of a tyrant thus reclaimed to lenity?

When five brethren had set upon the great emperor Ginsong alone, with his sabre he slew four of them; he was struggling with the fifth, when his guards, coming up, were going to cut the conspirator into a thousand pieces. "No, no," cried the emperor, with a calm and placid countenance, "of all his brothers he is the only one remaining; at least let one of the family be suffered to live, that his aged parents may have somebody left to feed and comfort them."

When Haitong, the last emperor of the house of Ming, saw himself besieged in his own city by the usurper, he was resolved to issue from his palace with six hundred of his guards and give the enemy battle; but they forsook him. Being thus without hopes, and choosing death rather than to fall alive into the hands of a rebel, he retired to his garden, conducting his little daughter, an only child, in his hand; there in a private arbor, unsheathing his sword, he stabbed the young innocent to the heart, and then despatched himself, leaving words written with his blood on the border of his vest: "Forsaken by my subjects, abandoned by my friends, use my body as you will, but spare, oh, spare my people!"

An empire which has thus continued invariably the same for such a long succession of ages; which, though at last conquered by the Tartars, still preserves its ancient laws and learning, and may more properly be said to annex the dominions of Tartary to its empire than to admit a foreign conqueror; an empire as large as Europe, governed by one law, acknowledging subjection to one prince, and experiencing but one revolution of any continuance in the space of four thousand years — this is something so peculiarly great, that I am naturally led to despise all other nations on the comparison. Here we see no religious persecutions, no enmity between mankind for difference in opinion. The disciples of Lao-keun, the idolatrous sectaries of Fohi, and the philosophical children of Confucius, only strive to show by their actions the truth of their doctrines.

Now turn from this happy, peaceful scene to Europe, the theatre of intrigue, avarice, and ambition. How many revolutions does it not experience in the compass even of one age! and to what do these revolutions tend but the destruction of thousands? Every great event is replete with some new calamity. The seasons of serenity are passed over in silence, their histories seem to speak only of the storm.

There we see the Romans extending their

power over barbarous nations, and in turn becoming a prey to those whom they had conquered. We see those barbarians, when become Christians, engaged in continual war with the followers of Mahomet; or more dreadful still, destroying each other. We see councils in the earlier ages authorizing every iniquity; crusades spreading desolation in the country left as well as that to be conquered; excommunications freeing subjects from natural allegiance, and persuading to sedition; blood flowing in the fields and on scaffolds; tortures used as arguments to convince the recusant; to heighten the horror of the piece, behold it shaded with wars, rebellions, treasons, plots, politics, and poison.

And what advantage has any country of Europe obtained from such calamities? Scarce any. Their dissensions for more than a thousand years have served to make each other unhappy, but have enriched none. All the great nations still nearly preserve their ancient limits; none have been able to subdue the other, and to terminate the dispute. France, in spite of the conquests of Edward the Third and Henry the Fifth, notwithstanding the efforts of Charles the Fifth and Philip the Second, still remains within its ancient limits. Spain, Germany, Great Britain, Poland, the states of the North, are nearly still the same. What effect, then, has the blood of so many thousands, the destruc-

tion of so many cities, produced? Nothing either great or considerable. The Christian princes have lost, indeed, much from the enemies of Christendom, but they have gained nothing from each other. Their princes, because they preferred ambition to justice, deserve the character of enemies to mankind; and their priests, by neglecting morality for opinion, have mistaken the interests of society.

On whatever side we regard the history of Europe we shall perceive it to be a tissue of crimes, follies, and misfortunes; of politics without design, and wars without consequence. In this long list of human infirmity, a great character or a shining virtue may sometimes happen to arise, as we often meet a cottage or a cultivated spot in the most hideous wilderness; but for an Alfred, an Alphonso, a Frederic, or one Alexander the Third, we meet a thousand princes who have disgraced humanity.

THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF DISTINGUISHING MEN IN ENGLAND BY THEIR DRESS

IN all other countries, my dear Fum Hoam, the rich are distinguished by their dress. In Persia, China, and most parts of Europe, those who are possessed of much gold or silver put some of it upon their clothes; but in England those who carry much upon their clothes are remarked for

having but little in their pockets. A tawdry outside is regarded as a badge of poverty; and those who can sit at home and gloat over their thousands in silent satisfaction are generally found to do it in plain clothes.

This diversity of thinking from the rest of the world which prevails here I was first at a loss to account for; but am since informed that it was introduced by an intercourse between them and their neighbors, the French; who, whenever they came in order to pay those islanders a visit, were generally very well dressed and very poor — daubed with lace, but all the gilding on the outside. By this means laced clothes have been brought so much into contempt that at present even their mandarins are ashamed of finery.

I must own myself a convert to English simplicity. I am no more for ostentation of wealth than of learning; the person who in company should pretend to be wiser than others I am apt to regard as illiterate and ill-bred; the person whose clothes are extremely fine I am too apt to consider as not being possessed of any superiority of fortune, but resembling those Indians who are found to wear all the gold they have in the world in a bob at the nose.

I was lately introduced into a company of the best-dressed men I have seen since my arrival. Upon entering the room I was struck with awe

at the grandeur of the different dresses. "That personage," thought I, "in blue and gold must be some emperor's son; that in green and silver a prince of the blood; he in embroidered scarlet a prime-minister — all first-rate noblemen, I suppose, and well-looking noblemen too." I sat for some time, with that uneasiness which conscious inferiority produces in the ingenuous mind, all attention to their discourse. However, I found their conversation more vulgar than I could have expected from personages of such distinction. "If these," thought I to myself, "be princes, they are the most stupid princes I have ever conversed with;" yet still I continued to venerate their dress; for dress has a kind of mechanical influence on the mind.

My friend in black, indeed, did not behave with the same deference, but contradicted the finest of them all in the most peremptory tones of contempt. But I had scarcely time to wonder at the imprudence of his conduct, when I found occasion to be equally surprised at the absurdity of theirs; for upon the entry of a middle-aged man, dressed in a cap, dirty shirt, and boots, the whole circle seemed diminished of their former importance, and contended who should be first to pay their obeisance to the stranger. They somewhat resembled a circle of Calmucks offering incense to a bear.

Eager to know the cause of so much seeming contradiction, I whispered my friend out of the room, and found that the august company consisted of no other than a dancing-master, two fiddlers, and a third-rate actor, all assembled in order to make a set at country-dances — as the middle-aged gentleman whom I saw enter was a squire from the country, and desirous of learning the new manner of footing, and smoothing up the rudiments of his rural minuet.

I was no longer surprised at the authority which my friend assumed among them; nay, was even displeased (pardon my Eastern education) that he had not kicked every creature of them downstairs. "What!" said I, "shall a set of such paltry fellows dress themselves up like sons of kings, and claim even the transitory respect of half an hour? There should be some law to restrain so manifest a breach of privilege; they should go from house to house, as in China, with the instruments of their profession strung round their necks; by this means we might be able to distinguish and treat them in a style of becoming contempt."

"Hold, my friend," replied my companion, "were your reformation to take place, as dancing-masters and fiddlers now mimic gentlemen in appearance, we should then find our fine gentlemen conforming to theirs. A beau might be introduced to a lady of fashion with a fiddle-case hanging at

his neck by a red ribbon, and, instead of a cane, might carry a fiddle-stick. Though to be as dull as a first-rate dancing-master might be used with proverbial justice; yet, dull as he is, many a fine gentleman sets him up as the proper standard of politeness; copies not only the pert vivacity of his air, but the flat insipidity of his conversation. In short, if you make a law against dancing-masters imitating the fine gentlemen, you should with as much reason enact that no fine gentleman shall imitate the dancing-master."

After I had left my friend I made toward home, reflecting as I went upon the difficulty of distinguishing men by their appearance. Invited, however, by the freshness of the evening, I did not return directly, but went to ruminate on what had passed in a public garden belonging to the city. Here, as I sat upon one of the benches, and felt the pleasing sympathy which nature in bloom inspires, a disconsolate figure, who sat on the other end of the seat, seemed no way to enjoy the serenity of the season. His dress was miserable beyond description: a thread-bare coat of the rudest materials; a shirt, though clean, yet extremely coarse; hair that seemed to have been long unconscious of the comb; and all the rest of his equipage impressed with the marks of genuine poverty.

As he continued to sigh, and testify every symptom of despair, I was naturally led, from a motive

of humanity, to offer comfort and assistance. You know my heart, and that all who are miserable may claim a place there. The pensive stranger at first declined my conversation; but at last, perceiving a peculiarity in my accent and manner of thinking, he began to unfold himself by degrees.

I now found that he was not so very miserable as he at first appeared: upon my offering him a small piece of money he refused my favor, yet without appearing displeased at my intended generosity. It is true he sometimes interrupted the conversation with a sigh, and talked pathetically of neglected merit; yet still I could perceive a benignity in his countenance that, upon a closer inspection, bespoke inward content.

Upon a pause in the conversation I was going to take my leave, when he begged I would favor him with my company home to supper. I was surprised at such a demand from a person of his appearance; but willing to indulge curiosity, I accepted his invitation, and, though I felt some repugnance at being seen with one who appeared so very wretched, went along with seeming alacrity.

Still, as he approached nearer home his good-humor proportionably seemed to increase. At last he stopped, not at the gate of a hovel, but of a magnificent palace! When I cast my eyes upon all the sumptuous elegance which everywhere presented upon entering, and then when I looked at

my seemingly miserable conductor, I could scarcely think that all this finery belonged to him; yet in fact it did. Numerous servants ran through the apartments with silent assiduity; several ladies of beauty, and magnificently dressed, came to welcome his return; a most elegant supper was provided: in short, I found the person, whom a little before I had sincerely pitied, to be in reality a most refined epicure — one who courted contempt abroad, in order to feel with keener gust the pleasures of pre-eminence at home. Adieu.

THE ABSURD TASTE FOR OBSCENE AND PERT
NOVELS, SUCH AS "TRISTRAM SHANDY"¹

How often have we admired the eloquence of Europe! that strength of thinking, that delicacy of imagination, even beyond the efforts of the Chi-

¹ "The following anecdote we have from a sure source: Soon after 'Tristram' had appeared, Sterne asked a Yorkshire lady of fortune and condition whether she had read his book: 'I have not, Mr. Sterne,' was the answer; 'and, to be plain with you, I am informed it is not proper for female perusal.' 'My dear good lady,' replied the author, 'do not be gulled by such stories; the book is like your young heir there' (pointing to a child of three years old, who was rolling on the carpet in his white tunics), 'he shows at times a good deal that is usually concealed, but it is all in perfect innocence!' This witty excuse may be so far admitted; for it cannot be said that the licentious humor of 'Tristram Shandy' is of the kind which applies itself to the passions, or is calculated to corrupt society. But it is a sin against taste, if allowed to be harmless as to morals. A handful of mud is neither a fire-brand nor a stone; but to fling it about in sport, argues coarseness of mind and want of common manners." — SIR WALTER SCOTT, *Prose Works*.

nese themselves. How were we enraptured with those bold figures which sent every sentiment with force to the heart! How have we spent whole days together in learning those arts by which European writers got within the passions, and led the reader as if by enchantment!

But though we have learned most of the rhetorical figures of the last age, yet there seems to be one or two of great use here which have not yet travelled to China. The figures I mean are called bawdy and pertness: none are more fashionable; none so sure of admirers; they are of such a nature that the merest blockhead, by a proper use of them, shall have the reputation of a wit; they lie level to the meanest capacities, and address those passions which all have, or would be ashamed to disown.

It has been observed, and I believe with some truth, that it is very difficult for a dunce to obtain the reputation of a wit; yet, by the assistance of the figure bawdy, this may be easily effected, and a bawdy blockhead often passes for a fellow of smart parts and pretensions. Every object in nature helps the jokes forward, without scarce any effort of the imagination. If a lady stands, something very good may be said upon that; if she happens to fall, with the help of a little fashionable pruriency, there are forty sly things ready on the occasion. But a prurient jest has always been

found to give most pleasure to a few very old gentlemen, who, being in some measure dead to other sensations, feel the force of the allusion with double violence on the organs of risibility.

An author who writes in this manner is generally sure, therefore, of having the very old and the impotent among his admirers; for these he may properly be said to write, and from these he ought to expect his reward; his works being often a very proper succedaneum to cantharides, or an asafœtida pill. His pen should be considered in the same light as the squirt of an apothecary, both being directed at the same generous end.

But though this manner of writing be perfectly adapted to the taste of gentlemen and ladies of fashion here, yet still it deserves greater praise in being equally suited to the most vulgar apprehensions. The very ladies and gentlemen of Benin or Caffraria are in this respect tolerably polite, and might relish a prurient joke of this kind with critical propriety; probably, too, with higher gust, as they wear neither breeches nor petticoats. . .

It is certain I never could have expected the ladies here, biased as they are by education, capable at once of bravely throwing off their prejudices, and not only applauding books in which this figure makes the only merit, but even adopting it in their own conversation. Yet so it is; the pretty innocents now carry those books openly in their

hands which formerly were hid under the cushion; they now lisp their double meanings with so much grace, and talk over the raptures they bestow with such little reserve, that I am sometimes reminded of a custom among the entertainers in China, who think it a piece of necessary breeding to whet the appetites of their guests, by letting them smell dinner in the kitchen before it is served up to table.

The veneration we have for many things entirely proceeds from their being carefully concealed. Were the idolatrous Tartar permitted to lift the veil which keeps his idol from view, it might be a certain method to cure his future superstition: with what a noble spirit of freedom, therefore, must that writer be possessed who bravely paints things as they are, who lifts the veil of modesty, who displays the most hidden recesses of the temple, and shows the erring people that the object of their vows is either, perhaps, a mouse or a monkey.

However, though this figure be at present so much in fashion; though the professors of it are so much caressed by the great, those perfect judges of literary excellence; yet it is confessed to be only a revival of what was once fashionable here before. There was a time when, by this very manner of writing, the gentle Tom D'Urfey, as I read in English authors, acquired his great repu-

tation, and thus became the favorite of a king.

The works of this original genius, though they never travelled abroad to China, and scarce have reached posterity at home, were once found upon every fashionable toilet, and made the subject of polite — I mean very polite — conversation. “Has your grace seen Mr. D’Urfey’s last new thing, the ‘Oylet Hole?’ A most facetious piece!”

“Sure, my lord, all the world must have seen it; D’Urfey is certainly the most comical creature alive. It is impossible to read his things and live. Was there ever anything so natural and pretty, as when the squire and Bridget meet in the cellar? And then the difficulties they both find in broaching the beer barrel are so arch and so ingenious! We have certainly nothing of this kind in the language.” In this manner they spoke then, and in this manner they speak now; for though the successor of D’Urfey does not excel him in wit, the world must confess he outdoes him in obscenity.

There are several very dull fellows, who, by a few mechanical helps, sometimes learn to become extremely brilliant and pleasing, with a little dexterity in the management of the eyebrows, fingers, and nose. By imitating a cat, a sow and pigs; by a loud laugh, and a slap on the shoulder; the most ignorant are furnished out for conversation. But the writer finds it impossible to throw his winks,

his shrugs, or his attitudes upon paper ; he may borrow some assistance, indeed, by printing his face at the title-page ; but, without wit, to pass for a man of ingenuity, no other mechanical help but downright obscenity will suffice. By speaking to some peculiar sensations we are always sure of exciting laughter, for the jest does not lie in the writer, but in the subject.

But bawdy is often helped on by another figure, called pertness ; and few indeed are found to excel in one that are not possessed of the other. As in common conversation the best way to make the audience laugh is by first laughing yourself, so in writing the properest manner is to show an attempt at humor, which will pass upon most for humor in reality. To effect this, readers must be treated with the most perfect familiarity : in one page the author is to make them a low bow, and in the next to pull them by the nose ; he must talk in riddles, and then send them to bed in order to dream for the solution. He must speak of himself, and his chapters, and his manner, and what he would be at, and his own importance, and his mother's importance, with the most un pitying prolixity ; now and then testifying his contempt for all but himself, smiling without a jest, and without wit professing vivacity. Adieu.

THE DIFFICULTY OF RISING IN LITERARY
REPUTATION WITHOUT INTRIGUE
OR RICHES

I HAVE frequently admired the manner of criticising in China, where the learned are assembled in a body to judge of every new publication; to examine the merits of the work without knowing the circumstances of the author; and then to usher it into the world with the proper marks of respect or reprobation.

In England there are no such tribunals erected; but if a man thinks proper to be a judge of genius, few will be at the pains to contradict his pretensions. If any choose to be critics, it is but saying they are critics; and from that time forward they become invested with full power and authority over every caitiff who aims at their instruction or entertainment.

As almost every member of society has by this means a vote in literary transactions, it is no way surprising to find the rich leading the way here, as in other common concerns of life, to see them either bribing the numerous herd of voters by their interest or browbeating them by their authority.

A great man says at his table that such a book is "no bad thing." Immediately the praise is carried off by five flatterers to be dispersed at twelve different coffee-houses, from whence it circulates,

still improving as it proceeds, through forty-five houses where cheaper liquors are sold; from thence it is carried away by the honest tradesman to his own fireside, where the applause is eagerly caught up by his wife and children, who have been long taught to regard his judgment as the standard of perfection. Thus, when we have traced a wide-extended literary reputation up to its original source, we shall find it derived from some great man, who has, perhaps, received all his education and English from a tutor of Berne or a dancing-master of Picardy.

The English are a people of good-sense; and I am the more surprised to find them swayed in their opinions by men who often, from their very education, are incompetent judges. Men who, being always bred in affluence, see the world only on one side are surely improper judges of human nature: they may, indeed, describe a ceremony, a pageant, or a ball; but how can they pretend to dive into the secrets of the human heart who have been nursed up only in forms, and daily behold nothing but the same insipid adulation smiling upon every face? Few of them have been bred in that best of schools, the school of adversity; and, by what I can learn, fewer still have been bred in any school at all.

From such a description one would think that a droning duke or a dowager duchess was not pos-

sessed of more just pretensions to taste than persons of less quality; and yet whatever the one or the other may write or praise shall pass for perfection without further examination. A nobleman has but to take a pen, ink, and paper and write away through three large volumes, and then sign his name to the title-page; though the whole might have been before more disgusting than his own rent-roll, yet signing his name and title gives value to the deed; title being alone equivalent to taste, imagination, and genius.¹

As soon as a piece, therefore, is published, the first questions are, "Who is the author? does he keep a coach? where lies his estate? what sort of a table does he keep?" If he happens to be poor and unqualified for such a scrutiny, he and his works sink into irremediable obscurity; and too late he finds that having fed upon turtle is a more ready way to fame than having digested Tully.

The poor devil against whom fashion has set its face vainly alleges that he has been bred in every part of Europe where knowledge was to be sold; that he has grown pale in the study of nature and himself; his works may please upon the perusal,

¹What woful stuff this madrigal would be,
In some starved hackney sonneteer, or me;
But let a lord once own the happy lines,
How the wit brightens! how the style refines!
Before his sacred name flies every fault,
And each exalted stanza teems with thought.— POPE

but his pretensions to fame are entirely disregarded; he is treated like a fiddler, whose music, though liked, is not much praised, because he lives by it; while a gentleman performer, though the most wretched scraper alive, throws the audience into raptures. The fiddler, indeed, may in such a case console himself by thinking that, while the other goes off with all the praise, he runs away with all the money; but here the parallel drops: for while the nobleman triumphs in unmerited applause, the author by profession steals off with — nothing.

The poor, therefore, here, who draw their pens auxiliary to the laws of their country, must think themselves very happy if they find, not fame, but forgiveness; and yet they are hardly treated; for as every country grows more polite the Press becomes more useful, and writers become more necessary as readers are supposed to increase. In a polished society that man, though in rags, who has the power of enforcing virtue from the Press is of more real use than forty stupid brachmans, or bonzes, or guebres, though they preached never so often, never so loud, or never so long. That man, though in rags, who is capable of deceiving even indolence into wisdom, and who professes amusement while he aims at reformation, is more useful in refined society than twenty cardinals, with all their scarlet, and tricked out in all the fopperies of scholastic finery.

HISTORY OF CATHARINA ALEXOWNA, WIFE OF PETER THE GREAT

A CHARACTER, such as you have represented that of your fair companion, which continues virtuous though loaded with infamy, is truly great. Many regard virtue because it is attended with applause; your favorite only for the internal pleasure it confers. I have often wished that ladies like her were proposed as models for female imitation, and not such as have acquired fame by qualities repugnant to the natural softness of the sex.

Women famed for their valor, their skill in politics, or their learning, leave the duties of their own sex in order to invade the privileges of ours. I can no more pardon a fair one for endeavoring to wield the club of Hercules than I could him for attempting to twirl her distaff.

The modest virgin, the prudent wife, or the careful matron are much more serviceable in life than petticoated philosophers, blustering heroines, or virago queens. She who makes her husband and her children happy, who reclaims the one from vice and trains up the other to virtue, is a much greater character than ladies described in romance, whose whole occupation is to murder mankind with shafts from their quiver or their eyes.

Women, it has been observed, are not naturally formed for great cares themselves, but to soften

ours. Their tenderness is the proper reward for the dangers we undergo for their preservation; and the ease and cheerfulness of their conversation, our desirable retreat from the fatigues of intense application. They are confined within the narrow limits of domestic assiduity; and when they stray beyond them, they move beyond their sphere, and consequently without grace.

Fame, therefore, has been very unjustly dispensed among the female sex. Those who least deserved to be remembered meet our admiration and applause; while many, who have been an honor to humanity, are passed over in silence. Perhaps no age has produced a stronger instance of misplaced fame than the present: the Semiramis and the Thalestris of antiquity are talked of, while a modern character, infinitely greater than either, is unnoticed and unknown.

Catharina Alexowna, born near Derpat, a little city in Livonia, was heir to no other inheritance than the virtues and frugality of her parents. Her father being dead, she lived with her aged mother in their cottage covered with straw; and both, though very poor, were very contented. Here, retired from the gaze of the world, by the labor of her hands she supported her parent, who was now incapable of supporting herself. While Catharina spun, the old woman would sit by and read some book of devotion; thus, when the fatigues of the

day were over, both would sit down contentedly by their fireside, and enjoy the frugal meal with vacant festivity.

Though her face and person were models of perfection, yet her whole attention seemed bestowed upon her mind; her mother taught her to read, and an old Lutheran minister instructed her in the maxims and duties of religion. Nature had furnished her not only with a ready but a solid turn of thought — not only with a strong but a right understanding. Such truly female accomplishments procured her several solicitations of marriage from the peasants of the country; but their offers were refused, for she loved her mother too tenderly to think of a separation.

Catharina was fifteen when her mother died; she now, therefore, left her cottage, and went to live with the Lutheran minister by whom she had been instructed from her childhood. In his house she resided in quality of governess to his children; at once reconciling in her character unerring prudence with surprising vivacity.

The old man, who regarded her as one of his own children, had her instructed in dancing and music by the masters who attended the rest of his family; thus she continued to improve till he died, by which accident she was once more reduced to pristine poverty. The country of Livonia was at this time wasted by war, and lay in a most miser-

able state of desolation. Those calamities are ever most heavy upon the poor; wherefore Catharina, though possessed of so many accomplishments, experienced all the miseries of hopeless indigence. Provisions becoming every day more scarce, and her private stock being entirely exhausted, she resolved at last to travel to Marienburg, a city of greater plenty.

With her scanty wardrobe packed up in a wallet, she set out on her journey on foot; she was to walk through a region miserable by nature, but rendered still more hideous by the Swedes and Russians, who, as each happened to become masters, plundered it at discretion; but hunger had taught her to despise the dangers and fatigues of the way.

One evening upon her journey, as she had entered a cottage by the wayside, to take up her lodging for the night, she was insulted by two Swedish soldiers, who insisted upon qualifying her, as they termed it, to follow the camp. They might probably have carried their insults into violence, had not a subaltern officer, accidentally passing by, come in to her assistance; upon his appearing, the soldiers immediately desisted; but her thankfulness was hardly greater than her surprise when she instantly recognized in her deliverer the son of the Lutheran minister, her former instructor, benefactor, and friend.

This was a happy interview for Catharina: the little stock of money she had brought from home was by this time quite exhausted; her clothes were gone, piece by piece, in order to satisfy those who had entertained her in their houses. Her generous countryman, therefore, parted with what he could spare to buy her clothes, furnished her with a horse, and gave her letters of recommendation to Mr. Gluck, a faithful friend of his father's and superintendent of Marienburg.

Our beautiful stranger had only to appear to be well received; she was immediately admitted into the superintendent's family as governess to his two daughters; and though yet but seventeen, showed herself capable of instructing her sex not only in virtue but politeness. Such was her good sense and beauty, that her master himself in a short time offered her his hand, which, to his great surprise, she thought proper to refuse. Actuated by a principle of gratitude, she was resolved to marry her deliverer only, even though he had lost an arm, and was otherwise disfigured by wounds in the service.

In order, therefore, to prevent further solicitations from others, as soon as the officer came to town upon duty she offered him her person, which he accepted with transport, and their nuptials were solemnized as usual. But all the lines of her fortune were to be striking: the very day on which

they were married the Russians laid siege to Marienburg. The unhappy soldier had no time to enjoy the well-earned pleasures of matrimony; he was called off before consummation to an attack, from which he was never after seen to return.

In the mean time the siege went on with fury, aggravated on one side by obstinacy, on the other by revenge. This war between the two Northern powers at that time was truly barbarous; the innocent peasant and the harmless virgin often shared the fate of the soldier in arms. Marienburg was taken by assault; and such was the fury of the assailants, that not only the garrison, but almost all the inhabitants — men, women, and children — were put to the sword. At length, when the carnage was pretty well over, Catharina was found hid in an oven.

She had been hitherto poor, but still was free; she was now to conform to her hard fate, and learn what it was to be a slave: in this situation, however, she behaved with piety and humility; and though misfortunes had abated her vivacity, yet she was cheerful. The fame of her merit and resignation reached even Prince Menzikoff, the Russian general: he desired to see her, was struck with her beauty, bought her from the soldier her master, and placed her under the direction of his own sister. Here she was treated with all the respect which her merit deserved, while her beauty

every day improved along with her rare good fortune.

She had not been long in this situation, when Peter the Great, paying the prince a visit, Catharina happened to come in with some dry fruits, which she served round with peculiar modesty. The mighty monarch saw and was struck with her beauty. He returned the next day, called for the beautiful slave, asked her several questions, and found her understanding even more perfect than her person.

He had been forced when young to marry from motives of interest; he was now resolved to marry pursuant to his own inclinations. He immediately inquired the history of the fair Livonian, who was not yet eighteen. He traced her through the vale of obscurity, through all the vicissitudes of her fortune, and found her truly great in them all. The meanness of her birth was no obstruction to his design; their nuptials were solemnized in private, the prince assuring his courtiers that virtue alone was the properest ladder to a throne.

We now see Catharina, from the low mud-walled cottage, empress of the greatest kingdom upon earth. The poor solitary wanderer is now surrounded by thousands who find happiness in her smile. She who formerly wanted a meal is now capable of diffusing plenty upon whole nations. To her fortune she owed a part of this pre-

eminence, but to her virtues she owed more.¹

She ever after retained those great qualities which first placed her on a throne; and while the extraordinary prince, her husband, labored for the reformation of his male subjects, she studied in her turn the improvement of her own sex. She altered their dresses, introduced mixed assemblies, instituted an order of female knighthood; and at length, when she had greatly filled all the stations of empress, friend, wife, and mother, bravely died without regret, regretted by all. Adieu.

THE FOLLY OF ATTEMPTING TO LEARN WISDOM BY BEING A RECLUSE²

Books, my son, while they teach us to respect the interests of others, often make us unmindful of our own: while they instruct the youthful reader to grasp at social happiness, he grows miserable in detail, and, attentive to universal harmony, often forgets that he himself has a part to sustain in the concert. I dislike, therefore, the philosopher

¹ "There have been," says Voltaire, "instances, before this, of private persons being raised to the throne; but that a poor stranger, who had been discovered amid the ruins of a plundered town, should become the absolute sovereign of that very empire into which she was led captive, is an incident which fortune and merit have never before produced in the annals of the world."

² Many of the observations in this paper are to be found in Goldsmith's letters and in others of his writings, and allude, as he indeed admits, to his own outset in life. — CUNNINGHAM'S *Note*.

who describes the inconveniences of life in such pleasing colors that the pupil grows enamored of distress, longs to try the charms of poverty, meets it without dread, nor fears its inconveniences till he severely feels them.

A youth who has thus spent his life among books, new to the world, and unacquainted with man but by philosophic information, may be considered as a being whose mind is filled with the vulgar errors of the wise: utterly unqualified for a journey through life, yet confident of his own skill in the direction, he sets out with confidence, blunders on with vanity, and finds himself at last undone.

He first has learned from books, and then lays it down as a maxim, that all mankind are virtuous or vicious in excess; and he has been long taught to detest vice and love virtue: warm, therefore, in attachments, and steadfast in enmity, he treats every creature as a friend or foe; expects from those he loves unerring integrity, and consigns his enemies to the reproach of wanting every virtue. On this principle he proceeds; and here begin his disappointments. Upon a closer inspection of human nature he perceives that he should have moderated his friendship, and softened his severity; for he often finds the excellences of one part of mankind clouded with vice, and the faults of the other brightened with virtue; he finds no char-

acter so sanctified that has not its failings, none so infamous but has somewhat to attract our esteem; he beholds impiety in lawn, and fidelity in fetters.

He now, therefore, but too late, perceives that his regards should have been more cool, and his hatred less violent; that the truly wise seldom court romantic friendships with the good, and avoid, if possible, the resentment even of the wicked: every moment gives him fresh instances that the bonds of friendship are broken if drawn too closely, and that those whom he has treated with disrespect more than retaliate the injury. At length, therefore, he is obliged to confess that he has declared war upon the vicious half of mankind, without being able to form an alliance among the virtuous to espouse his quarrel.

Our book-taught philosopher, however, is now too far advanced to recede; and though poverty be the just consequence of the many enemies his conduct has created, yet he is resolved to meet it without shrinking. Philosophers have described poverty in most charming colors, and even his vanity is touched in thinking that he shall show the world in himself one more example of patience, fortitude, and resignation. "Come then, O Poverty! for what is there in thee dreadful to the wise? Temperance, health, and frugality walk in thy train; cheerfulness and liberty are ever thy

companions. Shall any be ashamed of thee, of whom Cincinnatus was not ashamed? The running brook, the herbs of the field, can amply satisfy nature; man wants but little, nor that little long. Come, then, O Poverty, while kings stand by and gaze with admiration at the true philosopher's resignation."

The goddess appears; for Poverty ever comes at the call: but, alas! he finds her by no means the charming figure books and his warm imagination had painted. As when an Eastern bride, whom her friends and relations had long described as a model of perfection, pays her first visit, the long-ing bridegroom lifts the veil to see a face he had never seen before; but, instead of a countenance blazing with beauty like the sun, he beholds deformity shooting icicles to his heart; such appears Poverty to her new entertainer; all the fabric of enthusiasm is at once demolished, and a thousand miseries rise upon its ruins, while Contempt, with pointing finger, is foremost in the hideous procession.

The poor man now finds that he can get no kings to look at him while he is eating; he finds that, in proportion as he grows poor, the world turns its back upon him, and gives him leave to act the philosopher in all the majesty of solitude. It might be agreeable enough to play the philosopher while we are conscious that mankind are specta-

tors; but what signifies wearing the mask of sturdy contentment, and mounting the stage of restraint, when not one creature will assist at the exhibition? Thus is he forsaken of men, while his fortitude wants the satisfaction even of self-applause; for either he does not feel his present calamities, and that is natural insensibility, or he disguises his feelings, and that is dissimulation.

Spleen now begins to take up the man: not distinguishing in his resentments, he regards all mankind with detestation; and, commencing man-hater, seeks solitude to be at liberty to rail.

It has been said that he who retires to solitude is either a beast or an angel. The censure is too severe, and the praise unmerited: the discontented being who retires from society is generally some good-natured man, who has begun life without experience, and knew not how to gain it in his intercourse with mankind. Adieu.

FORTUNE PROVED NOT TO BE BLIND — THE STORY OF THE AVARICIOUS MILLER

THE Europeans are themselves blind who describe Fortune without sight. No first-rate beauty ever had finer eyes, or saw more clearly: they who have no other trade but seeking their fortune need never hope to find her; coquet-like, she flies from her close pursuers, and at last fixes on the plodding mechanic who stays at home and minds his business.

I am amazed how men can call her blind, when, by the company she keeps, she seems so very discerning. Wherever you see a gaming-table, be very sure Fortune is not there; wherever you see a house with the doors open, be very sure Fortune is not there; when you see a man whose pocket-holes are laced with gold, be satisfied Fortune is not there; wherever you see a beautiful woman good-natured and obliging, be convinced Fortune is never there. In short, she is ever seen accompanying industry, and as often trundling a wheelbarrow as lolling in a coach-and-six.

If you would make Fortune your friend, or, to personize her no longer, if you desire, my son, to be rich and have money, be more eager to save than to acquire. When people say, "Money is to be got here, and money is to be got there," take no notice: mind your own business; stay where you are, and secure all you can get, without stirring. When you hear that your neighbor has picked up a purse of gold in the street, never run out into the same street looking about you in order to pick up such another; or when you are informed that he has made a fortune in one branch of business, never change your own in order to be his rival. Do not desire to be rich all at once, but patiently add farthing to farthing. Perhaps you despise the petty sum; and yet they who want a farthing, and

have no friend that will lend them it, think farthings very good things. Whang, the foolish miller, when he wanted a farthing in his distress, found that no friend would lend, because they knew he wanted. Did you ever read the story of Whang in our books of Chinese learning — he who, despising small sums, and grasping at all, lost even what he had?

Whang, the miller, was naturally avaricious; nobody loved money better than he, or more respected those that had it. When people would talk of a rich man in company, Whang would say, I know him very well; he and I have been long acquainted; he and I are intimate; he stood for a child of mine. But if ever a poor man was mentioned, he had not the least knowledge of the man; he might be very well for aught he knew; but he was not fond of many acquaintances, and loved to choose his company.

Whang, however, with all his eagerness for riches, was in reality poor; he had nothing but the profits of his mill to support him; but though these were small, they were certain: while his mill stood and went he was sure of eating; and his frugality was such that he every day laid some money by, which he would at intervals count and contemplate with much satisfaction. Yet still his acquisitions were not equal to his desires; he only found himself above want, whereas he desired to be pos-

sessed of a larger measure of affluence.

One day, as he was indulging these wishes, he was informed that a neighbor of his had found a pan of money underground, having dreamed of it three nights running before. These tidings were daggers to the heart of poor Whang. "Here am I," says he, "toiling and moiling from morning till night for a few paltry farthings, while neighbor Hunks only goes quietly to bed and dreams himself into thousands before morning. Oh that I could dream like him! With what pleasure would I dig round the pan; how slyly would I carry it home; not even my wife should see me: and then, oh the pleasure of thrusting one's hand into a heap of gold up to the elbow!"

Such reflections only served to make the miller unhappy: he discontinued his former assiduity; he was quite disgusted with small gains, and his customers began to forsake him. Every day he repeated the wish, and every night laid himself down in order to dream. Fortune, that was for a long time unkind, at last, however, seemed to smile upon his distresses, and indulged him with the wished-for vision. He dreamed that under a certain part of the foundation of his mill there was concealed a monstrous pan of gold and diamonds, buried deep in the ground, and covered with a large flat stone. He rose up, thanked the stars, that were at last pleased to take pity

on his sufferings, and concealed his good luck from every person, as is usual in money dreams, in order to have the vision repeated the two succeeding nights, by which he should be certain of its veracity. His wishes in this also were answered: he still dreamed of the same pan of money, in the very same place.

Now, therefore, it was past a doubt; so, getting up early the third morning, he repairs alone, with a mattock in his hand, to the mill, and began to undermine that part of the wall to which the vision directed. The first omen of success that he met was a broken mug; digging still deeper, he turns up a house-tile, quite new and entire. At last, after much digging, he came to the broad flat stone, but then so large that it was beyond one man's strength to remove it. "Here," cried he in raptures to himself, "here it is! under this stone there is room for a very large pan of diamonds indeed. I must e'en go home to my wife and tell her the whole affair, and get her to assist me in turning it up." Away therefore he goes, and acquaints his wife with every circumstance of their good fortune. Her raptures on the occasion easily may be imagined; she flew around his neck, and embraced him in an agony of joy; but those transports, however, did not delay their eagerness to know the exact sum: returning, therefore, speedily together to the place where Whang had been

digging, there they found — not, indeed, the expected treasure, but the mill, their only support, undermined and fallen. Adieu.

THE NECESSITY OF AMUSING EACH OTHER WITH NEW BOOKS

THERE are numbers in this city who live by writing new books; and yet there are thousands of volumes in every large library unread and forgotten. This, upon my arrival, was one of those contradictions which I was unable to account for. "Is it possible," said I, "that there should be any demand for new books, before those already published are read? Can there be so many employed in producing a commodity with which the market is already overstocked, and with goods also better than any of modern manufacture?"

What at first view appeared an inconsistency is a proof at once of this people's wisdom and refinement. Even allowing the works of their ancestors better written than theirs, yet those of the moderns acquire a real value by being marked with the impression of the times. Antiquity has been in the possession of others; the present is our own: let us first, therefore, learn to know what belongs to ourselves, and then, if we have leisure, cast our reflections back to the reign of Shonou, who governed twenty thousand years before the creation of the moon.

The volumes of antiquity, like medals, may very well serve to amuse the curious; but the works of the moderns, like the current coin of a kingdom, are much better for immediate use: the former are often prized above their intrinsic value, and kept with care; the latter seldom pass for more than they are worth, and are often subject to the merciless hands of sweating critics and clipping compilers; the works of antiquity were ever praised, those of the moderns read; the treasures of our ancestors have our esteem, and we boast the passion; those of contemporary genius engage our heart, although we blush to own it. The visits we pay the former resemble those we pay the great; the ceremony is troublesome, and yet such as we would not choose to forego; our acquaintance with modern books is like sitting with a friend; our pride is not flattered in the interview, but it gives more internal satisfaction.

In proportion as society refines, new books must ever become more necessary. Savage rusticity is reclaimed by oral admonition alone; but the elegant excesses of refinement are best corrected by the still voice of a studious inquiry. In a polite age almost every person becomes a reader, and receives more instruction from the Press than the Pulpit. The preaching bonze may instruct the illiterate peasant; but nothing less than the insinuating address of a fine writer can win its way to a

heart already relaxed in all the effeminacy of refinement. Books are necessary to correct the vices of the polite; but those vices are ever changing, and the antidote should be changed accordingly — should still be new.

Instead, therefore, of thinking the number of new publications here too great, I could wish it still greater, as they are the most useful instruments of reformation. Every country must be instructed either by writers or preachers; but as the number of readers increases, the number of hearers is proportionably diminished; the writer becomes more useful, and the preaching bonze less necessary.

Instead, therefore, of complaining that writers are overpaid when their works procure them a bare subsistence, I should imagine it the duty of a state not only to encourage their numbers but their industry. A bonze is rewarded with immense riches for instructing only a few, even of the most ignorant of the people; and sure the poor scholar should not beg his bread who is capable of instructing a million.

Of all rewards, I grant, the most pleasing to a man of real merit is fame; but a polite age, of all times, is that in which scarcely any share of merit can acquire it. What numbers of fine writers in the latter empire of Rome, when refinement was carried to the highest pitch, have missed that fame

and immortality which they had fondly arrogated to themselves! How many Greek authors, who wrote at that period when Constantinople was the refined mistress of the empire, now rest, either not printed or not read, in the libraries of Europe! Those who came first, while either state as yet was barbarous, carried all the reputation away. Authors, as the age refined, became more numerous, and their numbers destroyed their fame. It is but natural, therefore, for the writer, when conscious that his works will not produce him fame hereafter, to endeavor to make them turn out to his temporal interest here.

Whatever be the motives which induce men to write, whether avarice or fame, the country becomes most wise and happy in which they most serve for instructors. The countries where sacerdotal instruction alone is permitted remain in ignorance, superstition, and hopeless slavery. In England, where there are as many new books published as in all the rest of Europe together, a spirit of freedom and reason reigns among the people: they have been often known to act like fools, they are generally found to think like men.

The only danger that attends a multiplicity of publications is that some of them may be calculated to injure rather than benefit society. But where writers are numerous, they also serve as a check upon each other; and perhaps a literary

inquisition is the most terrible punishment that can be conceived to a literary transgressor.

But, to do the English justice, there are but few offenders of this kind; their publications in general aim at mending either the heart or improving the common weal. The dullest writer talks of virtue, and liberty, and benevolence with esteem; tells his true story, filled with good and wholesome advice; warns against slavery, bribery, or the bite of a mad dog; and dresses up his little useful magazine of knowledge and entertainment at least with a good intention. The dunces of France, on the other hand, who have less encouragement, are more vicious. Tender hearts, languishing eyes, Leonora in love at thirteen, ecstatic transports, stolen blisses, are the frivolous subjects of their frivolous memoirs. In England, if a bawdy block-head thus breaks in on the community, he sets his whole fraternity in a roar; nor can he escape, even though he should fly to nobility for shelter.

Thus even dunces, my friend, may make themselves useful. But there are others whom nature has blessed with talents above the rest of mankind: men capable of thinking with precision and impressing their thoughts with rapidity; beings who diffuse those regards upon mankind which others contract and settle upon themselves. These deserve every honor from that community of which they are more peculiarly the children; to

such I would give my heart, since to them I am indebted for its humanity! Adieu.

THE PREFERENCE OF GRACE TO BEAUTY —
AN ALLEGORY

[*From Hingpo to Lien Chi Altangi*]

I STILL remain at Terki, where I have received that money which was remitted here in order to release me from captivity. My fair companion still improves in my esteem; the more I know her mind, her beauty becomes more poignant: she appears charming, even among the daughters of Circassia.

Yet, were I to examine her beauty with the art of a statuary, I should find numbers here that far surpass her: nature has not granted her all the boasted Circassian regularity of feature, and yet she greatly exceeds the fairest of the country in the art of seizing the affections. "Whence," have I often said to myself, "this resistless magic that attends even moderate charms? Though I regard the beauties of the country with admiration, every interview weakens the impression, but the form of Zelis grows upon my imagination; I never behold her without an increase of tenderness and respect. Whence this injustice of the mind, in preferring imperfect beauty to that which Nature seems to have finished with care? Whence the infatuation that he whom a comet could not amaze

should be astonished at a meteor?" When reason was thus fatigued to find an answer, my imagination pursued the subject, and this was the result:

I fancied myself placed between two landscapes — this called the Region of Beauty, and that the Valley of the Graces. The one was adorned with all that luxuriant nature could bestow: the fruits of various climates adorned the trees, the grove resounded with music, the gale breathed perfume, every charm that could arise from symmetry and exact distribution was here conspicuous, the whole offering a prospect of pleasure without end. The Valley of the Graces, on the other hand, seemed by no means so inviting; the streams and the groves appeared just as they usually do in frequented countries: no magnificent parterres, no concert in the grove; the rivulet was edged with weeds, and the rook joined its voice to that of the nightingale. All was simplicity and nature.

The most striking objects ever first allure the traveller. I entered the Region of Beauty with increased curiosity, and promised myself endless satisfaction in being introduced to the presiding goddess. I perceived several strangers, who entered with the same design; and what surprised me not a little was to see several others hastening to leave this abode of seeming felicity.

After some fatigue, I had at last the honor of being introduced to the goddess who represented

Beauty in person. She was seated on a throne, at the foot of which stood several strangers, lately introduced like me, all regarding her form in ecstasy. "Ah, what eyes! what lips! how clear her complexion! how perfect her shape!" At these exclamations Beauty, with downcast eyes, would endeavor to counterfeit modesty, but soon again looking round, as if to confirm every spectator in his favorable sentiments: sometimes she would attempt to allure us by smiles; and at intervals would bridle back, in order to inspire us with respect as well as tenderness.

This ceremony lasted for some time, and had so much employed our eyes that we had forgot all this while that the goddess was silent. We soon, however, began to perceive the defect. "What!" said we among each other, "are we to have nothing but languishing airs, soft looks, and inclinations of the head? will the goddess only deign to satisfy our eyes?" Upon this one of the company stepped up to present her with some fruits he had gathered by the way. She received the present most sweetly smiling, and with one of the whitest hands in the world, but still not a word escaped her lips.

I now found that my companions grew weary of their homage; they went off one by one, and, resolving not to be left behind, I offered to go in my turn; when, just at the door of the temple, I

was called back by a female whose name was Pride, and who seemed displeased at the behavior of the company. "Where are you hastening?" said she to me, with an angry air; "the Goddess of Beauty is here."

"I have been to visit her, madam," replied I, "and find her more beautiful even than report had made her."

"And why, then, will you leave her?" added the female.

"I have seen her long enough," returned I; "I have got all her features by heart. Her eyes are still the same. Her nose is a very fine one, but it is such a nose now as it was half an hour ago: could she throw a little more mind into her face, perhaps I should be for wishing to have more of her company."

"What signifies," replied my female, "whether she has a mind or not? has she any occasion for a mind, so formed as she is by nature? If she had a common face, indeed, there might be some reason for thinking to improve it; but when features are already perfect every alteration would but impair them. A fine face is already at the point of perfection, and a fine lady should endeavor to keep it so: the impression it would receive from thought would but disturb its whole economy."

To this speech I gave no reply, but made the best of my way to the Valley of the Graces. Here

I found all those who before had been my companions in the Region of Beauty, now upon the same errand.

As we entered the valley the prospect insensibly seemed to improve; we found everything so natural, so domestic and pleasing, that our minds, which before were congealed in admiration, now relaxed into gayety and good-humor. We had designed to pay our respects to the presiding goddess, but she was nowhere to be found. One of our companions asserted that her temple lay to the right; another, to the left; a third insisted that it was straight before us; and a fourth that we had left it behind. In short, we found everything familiar and charming, but could not determine where to seek for the Grace in person.

In this agreeable incertitude we passed several hours, and though very desirous of finding the goddess, by no means impatient of the delay. Every part of the valley presented some minute beauty, which, without offering itself, at once stole upon the soul, and captivated us with the charms of our retreat. Still, however, we continued to search, and might still have continued, had we not been interrupted by a voice which, though we could not see from whence it came, addressed us in this manner: —

“If you would find the Goddess of Grace, seek her not under one form, for she assumes a thous-

and. Ever changing under the eye of inspection, her variety, rather than her figure, is pleasing. In contemplating her beauty, the eye glides over every perfection with giddy delight, and, capable of fixing nowhere, is charmed with the whole. She is now Contemplation with solemn look, again Compassion with humid eye: she now sparkles with joy, soon every feature speaks distress; her looks at times invite our approach, at others repress our presumption. The goddess cannot be properly called beautiful under any one of these forms, but by combining them all she becomes irresistibly pleasing." Adieu.

THE FRENCH RIDICULED AFTER THEIR OWN MANNER

FROM my former accounts, you may be apt to fancy the English the most ridiculous people under the sun. They are indeed ridiculous; yet every other nation in Europe is equally so; each laughs at each, and the Asiatic at all.

I may, upon another occasion, point out what is most strikingly absurd in other countries; I shall, at present, confine myself only to France. The first national peculiarity a traveller meets upon entering that kingdom is an odd sort of a staring vivacity in every eye, not excepting even the children; the people, it seems, have got into their heads that they have more wit than others,

and so they stare in order to appear smart.

I know not how it happens, but there appears a sickly delicacy in the faces of their finest women. This may have introduced the use of paint, and paint produces wrinkles; so that a fine lady shall look like a hag at twenty-three. But as, in some measure, they never appear young, so it may be equally asserted that they actually think themselves never old: a gentle miss shall prepare for new conquests at sixty, shall hobble a rigadon when she can scarce walk out without a crutch; she shall affect the girl, play her fan and her eyes, and talk of sentiments, bleeding hearts, and expiring for love, when actually dying with age. Like a departing philosopher, she attempts to make her last moments the most brilliant of her life.

Their civility to strangers is what they are chiefly proud of; and, to confess sincerely, their beggars are the very politest beggars I ever knew: in other places a traveller is addressed with a piteous whine or a sturdy solemnity, but a French beggar shall ask your charity with a very genteel bow, and thank you for it with a smile and a shrug.

Another instance of this people's breeding I must not forget. An Englishman would not speak his native language in a company of foreigners, where he was sure that none understood him; a

travelling Hottentot himself would be silent if acquainted only with the language of his country; but a Frenchman shall talk to you whether you understand his language or not; never troubling his head whether you have learned French, still he keeps up the conversation, fixes his eye full in your face, and asks a thousand questions, which he answers himself for want of a more satisfactory reply.

But their civility to foreigners is not half so great as their admiration of themselves. Everything that belongs to them and their nation is great, magnificent beyond expression, quite romantic; every garden is a paradise, every hovel a palace, and every woman an angel. They shut their eyes close, throw their mouths wide open, and cry out in rapture, "*Sacre!* what beauty! *O Ciel!* what taste! *mort de ma vie!* what grandeur! Was ever any people like ourselves? We are the nation of men, and all the rest no better than two-legged barbarians."

I fancy the French would make the best cooks in the world, if they had but meat; as it is, they can dress you out five different dishes from a nettle-top, seven from a dock-leaf, and twice as many from a frog's haunches; these eat prettily enough when one is a little used to them, are easy of digestion, and seldom overload the stomach with crudities. They seldom dine under seven hot dishes.

It is true, indeed, with all this magnificence they seldom spread a cloth before the guests; but in that I cannot be angry with them, since those who have no linen on their backs may very well be excused for wanting it upon their tables.

Even religion itself loses its solemnity among them. Upon their roads, at about every five miles' distance, you see an image of the Virgin Mary, dressed up in grim head-cloths, painted cheeks, and an old red petticoat; before her a lamp is often kept burning, at which, with the saint's permission, I have frequently lighted my pipe. Instead of the Virgin, you are sometimes presented with a crucifix, at other times with a wooden Saviour, fitted out in complete garniture, with sponge, spear, nails, pincers, hammer, beeswax, and vinegar-bottle. Some of those images, I have been told, came down from heaven; if so, in heaven they have but bungling workmen.

In passing through their towns you frequently see the men sitting at the doors knitting stockings, while the care of cultivating the ground and pruning the vines falls to the women. This is, perhaps, the reason why the fair sex are granted some peculiar privileges in this country; particularly, when they can get horses, of riding without a side-saddle.

But I begin to think you may find this description pert and dull enough; perhaps it is so, yet in

general it is the manner in which the French usually describe foreigners; and it is but just to force a part of that ridicule back upon them which they attempt to lavish on others. Adieu.

ANECDOTES OF POETS WHO LIVED AND DIED IN CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRETCHEDNESS

I FANCY the character of a poet is in every country the same: fond of enjoying the present, careless of the future; his conversation that of a man of sense, his actions those of a fool; of fortitude able to stand unmoved at the bursting of an earthquake, yet of sensibility to be affected by the breaking of a teacup — such is his character, which, considered in every light, is the very opposite of that which leads to riches.

The poets of the West are as remarkable for their indigence as their genius, and yet, among the numerous hospitals designed to relieve the poor, I have heard of but one erected for the benefit of decayed authors. This was founded by Pope Urban the Eighth, and called the retreat of the incurables; intimating that it was equally impossible to reclaim the patients who sued for reception from poverty or from poetry. To be sincere, were I to send you an account of the lives of the Western poets, either ancient or modern, I fancy you would think me employed in collecting materials for a history of human wretchedness.

Homer is the first poet and beggar of note among the ancients: he was blind, and sung his ballads about the streets; but it is observed that his mouth was more frequently filled with verses than with bread. Plautus, the comic poet, was better off; he had two trades — he was a poet for his diversion, and helped to turn a mill in order to gain a livelihood. Terence was a slave, and Boethius died in jail.

Among the Italians, Paulo Borghese, almost as good a poet as Tasso, knew fourteen different trades, and yet died because he could get employment in none. Tasso himself, who had the most amiable character of all poets, has often been obliged to borrow a crown from some friend in order to pay for a month's subsistence. He has left us a pretty sonnet, addressed to his cat, in which he begs the light of her eyes to write by, being too poor to afford himself a candle. But Bentivoglio, poor Bentivoglio! chiefly demands our pity. His comedies will last with the Italian language. He dissipated a noble fortune in acts of charity and benevolence; but, falling into misery in his old age, was refused to be admitted into a hospital which he himself had erected.

In Spain, it is said, the great Cervantes died of hunger; and it is certain that the famous Camoens ended his days in a hospital.

If we turn to France we shall there find even

stronger instances of the ingratitude of the public. Vaugelas, one of the politest writers, and one of the honestest men of his time, was surnamed the Owl, from his being obliged to keep within all day, and venture out only by night, through fear of his creditors. His last will is very remarkable. After having bequeathed all his worldly substance to the discharging his debts, he goes on thus: "But as there still may remain some creditors unpaid, even after all that I have shall have been disposed of, in such a case, it is my last will that my body should be sold to the surgeons to the best advantage, and that the purchase should go to the discharging those debts which I owe to society; so that if I could not, while living, at least when dead, I may be useful."

Cassandre was one of the greatest geniuses of his time; yet all his merit could not procure him a bare subsistence. Being by degrees driven into a hatred of all mankind, from the little pity he found among them, he even ventured at last ungratefully to impute his calamities to Providence. In his last agonies, when the priest entreated him to rely on the justice of Heaven, and ask mercy from Him that made him, "If God," replies he, "has shown me no justice here, what reason have I to expect any from Him hereafter?" But being answered that a suspension of justice was no argument that should induce us to doubt of its real-

ity — "Let me entreat you," continued his confessor, "by all that is dear, to be reconciled to God, your Father, your Maker, and Friend."

"No," replied the exasperated wretch, "you know the manner in which He left me to live; and," pointing to the straw on which he was stretched, "you see the manner in which He leaves me to die!"

But the sufferings of the poet in other countries is nothing when compared to his distresses here; the names of Spenser and Otway, Butler and Dryden, are every day mentioned as a national reproach: some of them lived in a state of precarious indigence, and others literally died of hunger.

At present the few poets of England no longer depend on the great for subsistence; they have now no other patrons but the public, and the public, collectively considered, is a good and a generous master. It is, indeed, too frequently mistaken as to the merits of every candidate for favor; but to make amends, it is never mistaken long. A performance, indeed, may be forced for a time into reputation, but if destitute of real merit, it soon sinks; time, the touchstone of what is truly valuable, will soon discover the fraud, and an author should never arrogate to himself any share of success till his works have been read at least ten years with satisfaction.

A man of letters at present, whose works are

valuable, is perfectly sensible of their value. Every polite member of the community, by buying what he writes, contributes to reward him. The ridicule, therefore, of living in a garret might have been wit in the last age, but continues such no longer, because no longer true. A writer of real merit now may easily be rich, if his heart be set only on fortune; and for those who have no merit it is but fit that such should remain in merited obscurity. He may now refuse an invitation to dinner without fearing to incur his patron's displeasure, or to starve by remaining at home. He may now venture to appear in company with just such clothes as other men generally wear, and talk even to princes with all the conscious superiority of wisdom. Though he cannot boast of fortune here, yet he can bravely assert the dignity of independence. Adieu.

THE RACES OF NEWMARKET — DESCRIPTION OF A CART-RACE

OF all the places of amusement where gentlemen and ladies are entertained, I have not been yet to visit Newmarket. This, I am told, is a large field; where, upon certain occasions, three or four horses are brought together, then set a-running, and that horse which runs fastest wins the wager.

This is reckoned a very polite and fashionable amusement here, much more followed by the no-

bility than partridge-fighting at Java or paper kites in Madagascar. Several of the great here, I am told, understand as much of farriery as their grooms; and a horse with any share of merit can never want a patron among the nobility.

We have a description of this entertainment almost every day in some of the gazettes, as, for instance: "On such a day the Give-and-Take Plate was run for between his grace's Crab, his lordship's Periwinkle, and Squire Smackem's Slamerkin. All rode their own horses. There was the greatest concourse of nobility that has been known here for several seasons. The odds were in favor of Crab in the beginning; but Slamerkin, after the first heat, seemed to have the match hollow: however, it was soon seen that Periwinkle improved in wind, which at last turned out accordingly; Crab was run to a stand-still, Slamerkin was knocked up, and Periwinkle was brought in with universal applause." Thus, you see, Periwinkle received universal applause; and, no doubt, his lordship came in for some share of that praise which was so liberally bestowed upon Periwinkle. Sun of China! how glorious must the senator appear in his cap and leather breeches, his whip crossed in his mouth, and thus coming to the goal, among the shouts of grooms, jockeys, pimps, stable-bred dukes, and degraded generals!

From the description of this princely amuse-

ment, now transcribed, and from the great veneration I have for the characters of its principal promoters, I make no doubt but I shall look upon a horse-race with becoming reverence, predisposed as I am by a similar amusement, of which I have lately been a spectator; for just now I happened to have an opportunity of being present at a cart-race.

Whether this contention between three carts of different parishes was promoted by a subscription among the nobility, or whether the grand jury, in council assembled, had gloriously combined to encourage plaustral¹ merit, I cannot take upon me to determine; but certain it is, the whole was conducted with the utmost regularity and decorum, and the company, which made a brilliant appearance, were universally of opinion that the sport was high, the running fine, and the riders influenced by no bribe.

It was run on the road from London to a village called Brentford, between a turnip-cart, a dust-cart, and a dung-cart; each of the owners condescending to mount and be his own driver. The odds at starting were Dust against Dung five to four; but, after half a mile's going, the knowing ones found themselves all on the wrong side, and it was Turnip against the field, brass to silver.

¹ This, and another word in the same letter, *patibulary*, are among the very few words which Goldsmith has ventured to coin.
— CUNNINGHAM'S *Note*.

Soon, however, the contest became more doubtful; Turnip, indeed, kept the way, but it was perceived that Dung had better bottom. The road echoed with the shouts of the spectators. "Dung against Turnip! Turnip against Dung!" was now the universal cry; neck and neck; one rode lighter but the other had more judgment. I could not but particularly observe the ardor with which the fair sex espoused the cause of the different riders on this occasion; one was charmed with the unwashed beauties of Dung; another was captivated with the patibulary aspect of Turnip; while, in the mean time, unfortunate, gloomy Dust, who came whipping behind, was cheered by the encouragements of some and pity of all.

The contention now continued for some time without a possibility of determining to whom victory designed the prize. The winning-post appeared in view, and he who drove the turnip-cart assured himself of success; and successful he might have been had his horse been as ambitious as he; but, on approaching a turn from the road which led homewards, the horse fairly stood still, and refused to move a foot farther. The dung-cart had scarce time to enjoy this temporary triumph when it was pitched headlong into a ditch by the wayside and the rider left to wallow in congenial mud. Dust, in the mean time, soon came up, and not being far from the post, came in, amid the

shouts and acclamations of all the spectators, and greatly caressed by all the quality of Brentford. Fortune was kind only to one, who ought to have been favorable to all; each had peculiar merit, each labored hard to earn the prize, and each richly deserved the cart he drove.

I do not know whether this description may not have anticipated that which I intended giving of Newmarket. I am told there is little else to be seen even there. There may be some minute differences in the dress of the spectators, but none at all in their understandings. The quality of Brentford are as remarkable for politeness and delicacy as the breeders of Newmarket. The quality of Brentford drive their own carts, and the honorable fraternity of Newmarket ride their own horses. In short, the matches in one place are as rational as those in the other; and it is more than probable that turnips, dust, and dung are all that can be found to furnish out description in either.

Forgive me, my friend, but a person like me, bred up in a philosophic seclusion, is apt to regard, perhaps, with too much asperity those occurrences which sink man below his station in nature, and diminish the intrinsic value of humanity.

THE LADIES ADVISED TO GET HUSBANDS —
A STORY TO THIS PURPOSE

As the instruction of the fair sex in this country

is entirely committed to the care of foreigners — as their language-masters, music-masters, hair-frizzers, and governesses are all from abroad — I had some intentions of opening a female academy myself, and made no doubt, as I was quite a foreigner, of meeting a favorable reception.

In this I intended to instruct the ladies in all the conjugal mysteries: wives should be taught the art of managing husbands, and maids the skill of properly choosing them; I would teach a wife how far she might venture to be sick without giving disgust; she should be acquainted with the great benefits of the colic in the stomach, and all the thorough-bred insolence of fashion; maids should learn the secrets of nicely distinguishing every competitor; they should be able to know a prig, a squire and his horse, a beau and his monkey; but chiefly they should be taught the art of managing their smiles, from the contemptuous simper to the long, laborious laugh.

But I have discontinued the project; for what would signify teaching ladies the manner of governing or choosing husbands, when marriage is at present so much out of fashion that a lady is very well off who can get any husband at all? Celibacy now prevails in every rank of life; the streets are crowded with old bachelors, and the houses with ladies who have refused good offers, and are never likely to receive any for the future.

The only advice, therefore, I could give the fair sex, as things stand at present, is to get husbands as fast as they can. There is certainly nothing in the whole creation, not even Babylon in ruins, more truly deplorable than a lady in the virgin bloom of sixty-three, or a battered unmarried beau, who squibs about from place to place, showing his pigtail wig and his ears. The one appears to my imagination in the form of a double night-cap or a roll of pomatum; the other in the shape of an electuary or a box of pills.

I would once more, therefore, advise the ladies to get husbands. I would desire them not to discard an old lover without very sufficient reasons, nor treat the new with ill-nature till they know him false; let not prudes allege the falseness of the sex, coquettes the pleasures of long courtship, or parents the necessary preliminaries of penny for penny. I have reasons that would silence even a casuist in this particular. In the first place, therefore, I divide the subject into fifteen heads, and then *sic argumentor* — But, not to give you and myself the spleen, be contented at present with an Indian tale:

In a winding of the river Amidar, just before it falls into the Caspian Sea, there lies an island unfrequented by the inhabitants of the Continent. In this seclusion, blessed with all that wild, uncultivated nature could bestow, lived a princess and

her two daughters. She had been wrecked upon the coast while her children as yet were infants, who, of consequence, though grown up, were entirely unacquainted with man. Yet, inexperienced as the young ladies were in the opposite sex, both early discovered symptoms, the one of prudery, the other of being a coquette. The eldest was ever learning maxims of wisdom and discretion from her mamma, while the youngest employed all her hours in gazing at her own face in a neighboring fountain.

Their usual amusement in this solitude was fishing: their mother had taught them all the secrets of the art; she showed them which were the most likely places to throw out the line, what baits were most proper for the various seasons, and the best manner to draw up the finny prey, when they had hooked it. In this manner they spent their time, easy and innocent, till one day the princess, being indisposed, desired them to go and catch her a sturgeon or a shark for supper, which she fancied might sit easy on her stomach. The daughters obeyed, and clapping on a gold-fish, the usual bait on those occasions, went and sat upon one of the rocks, letting the gilded hook glide down with the stream.

On the opposite shore, farther down at the mouth of the river, lived a diver for pearls, a youth who by long habit in his trade was almost

grown amphibious, so that he could remain whole hours at the bottom of the water without ever fetching breath. He happened to be at that very instant diving when the ladies were fishing with the gilded hook. Seeing, therefore, the bait, which to him had the appearance of real gold, he was resolved to seize the prize; but both his hands being already filled with pearl oysters, he found himself obliged to snap at it with his mouth: the consequence is easily imagined; the hook, before unperceived, was instantly fastened in his jaw, nor could he, with all his efforts or his floundering, get free.

"Sister!" cries the youngest princess, "I have certainly caught a monstrous fish; I never perceived anything struggle so at the end of my line before; come and help me to draw it in." They both now, therefore, assisted in fishing up the diver on shore; but nothing could equal their surprise upon seeing him. "Bless my eyes!" cries the prude, "what have we got here? This is a very odd fish, to be sure! I never saw anything in my life look so queer: what eyes, what terrible claws, what a monstrous snout! I have read of this monster somewhere before; it certainly must be a tanlang, that eats women; let us throw it back into the sea where we found it."

The diver, in the mean time, stood upon the beach at the end of the line, with the hook in his

mouth, using every art that he thought could best excite pity, and particularly looking extremely tender, which is usual in such circumstances. The coquette, therefore, in some measure influenced by the innocence of his looks, ventured to contradict her companion.

"Upon my word, sister," says she, "I see nothing in the animal so very terrible as you are pleased to apprehend; I think it may serve well enough for a change. Always sharks, and sturgeons, and lobsters, and crawfish make me quite sick. I fancy a slice of this, nicely grilladed, and dressed up with shrimp sauce, would be very pretty eating. I fancy mamma would like a bit with pickles above all things in the world; and if it should not sit easy on her stomach, it will be time enough to discontinue it when found disagreeable, you know."

"Horrid!" cries the prude; "would the girl be poisoned? I tell you it is a tanlang; I have read of it in twenty places. It is everywhere described as the most pernicious animal that ever infested the ocean. I am certain it is the most insidious, ravenous creature in the world, and is certain destruction if taken internally." The youngest sister was now, therefore, obliged to submit: both assisted in drawing the hook with some violence from the diver's jaw; and he, finding himself at liberty, bent his breast against the broad wave and disap-

peared without the least regard for ceremony.

Just at this juncture the mother came down to the beach to know the cause of her daughters' delay; they told her every circumstance, describing the monster they had caught. The old lady was one of the most discreet women in the world; she was called the black-eyed princess, from two black eyes she had received in her youth, being a little addicted to boxing in her liquor.

"Alas, my children," cries she, "what have you done! the fish you caught was a man-fish, one of the most domestic animals in the world. We could have let him run and play about the garden, and he would have been twenty times more entertaining than our squirrel or monkey."

"If that be all," says the young coquette, "we will fish for him again. If that be all, I'll hold three toothpicks to one pound of snuff I catch him whenever I please." Accordingly, they threw in their line once more, but with all their gilding and paddling and assiduity, they could never after catch the diver. In this state of solitude and disappointment they continued for many years, still fishing, but without success; till at last the genius of the place, in pity to their distresses, changed the prude into a shrimp and the coquette into an oyster. Adieu.

THE FOLLY OF REMOTE OR USELESS DIS- QUISITIONS AMONG THE LEARNED

I AM amused, my dear Fum, with the labors of some of the learned here. One shall write you a whole folio on the dissection of a caterpillar. Another shall swell his works with a description of the plumage on the wing of a butterfly; a third shall see a little world on a peach-leaf, and publish a book to describe what his readers might see more clearly in two minutes, only by being furnished with eyes and a microscope.

I have frequently compared the understandings of such men to their own glasses. Their field of vision is too contracted to take in the whole of any but minute objects; they view all nature bit by bit: now the proboscis, now the antennæ, now the pinnæ of — a flea. Now the polypus comes to breakfast upon a worm; now it is kept up to see how long it will live without eating; now it is turned inside outward; and now it sickens and dies. Thus, they proceed, laborious in trifles, constant in experiment, without one single abstraction, by which alone knowledge may be properly said to increase; till at last their ideas, ever employed upon minute things, contract to the size of the diminutive object, and a single mite shall fill the whole mind's capacity.

Yet, believe me, my friend, ridiculous as these men are to the world, they are set up as objects of

esteem for each other. They have particular places appointed for their meetings; in which one shows his cockle-shell, and is praised by all the society; another produces his powder, makes some experiments that result in nothing, and comes off with admiration and applause; a third comes out with the important discovery of some new process in the skeleton of a mole, and is set down as the accurate and sensible; while one still more fortunate than the rest, by pickling, potting, and preserving monsters, rises into unbounded reputation.

The labors of such men, instead of being calculated to amuse the public, are laid out only in diverting each other. The world becomes very little the better or the wiser for knowing what is the peculiar food of an insect that is itself the food of another, which in its turn is eaten by a third; but there are men who have studied themselves into a habit of investigating and admiring such minutiae. To these such subjects are pleasing, as there are some who contentedly spend whole days in endeavoring to solve enigmas, or disentangle the puzzling-sticks of children.

But of all the learned those who pretend to investigate remote antiquity have least to plead in their own defence, when they carry this passion to a faulty excess. They are generally found to supply by conjecture the want of record, and then by perseverance are wrought up into a confidence

of the truth of opinions which even to themselves at first appeared founded only in imagination.

The Europeans have heard much of the kingdom of China ; its politeness, arts, commerce, laws, and morals are, however, but very imperfectly known among them. They have even now in their Indian warehouses numberless utensils, plants, minerals, and machines, of the use of which they are entirely ignorant ; nor can any among them even make a probable guess for what they might have been designed. Yet, though this people be so ignorant of the present real state of China, the philosophers I am describing have entered into long, learned, laborious disputes about what China was two thousand years ago. China and European happiness are but little connected even at this day ; but European happiness and China two thousand years ago have certainly no connection at all. However, the learned have written on and pursued the subject through all the labyrinths of antiquity ; though the early dews and the tainted gale be passed away, though no footsteps remain to direct the doubtful chase, yet still they run forward, open upon the uncertain scent, and, though in fact they follow nothing, are earnest in the pursuit. In this chase, however, they all take different ways. One, for example, confidently assures us that China was peopled by a colony from Egypt. Sesostris, he observes, led his army as far

as the Ganges; therefore, if he went so far, he might still have gone as far as China, which is but about a thousand miles from thence; therefore he did go to China; therefore China was not peopled before he went there; therefore it was peopled by him. Besides, the Egyptians have pyramids: the Chinese have in like manner their porcelain tower; the Egyptians used to light up candles upon every rejoicing: the Chinese have lanthorns upon the same occasion; the Egyptians had their great river: so had the Chinese. But what serves to put the matter past a doubt is that the ancient kings of China and those of Egypt were called by the same names. The Emperor Ki is certainly the same with King Atoes; for if we only change *K* into *A*, and *i* into *toes*, we shall have the name Atoes; and with equal ease Menes may be proved to be the same with the Emperor Yu; therefore the Chinese are a colony from Egypt.

But another of the learned is entirely different from the last; and he will have the Chinese to be a colony planted by Noah just after the deluge. First, from the vast similitude there is between the name of Fohi, the founder of the Chinese monarchy, and that of Noah, the preserver of the human race; Noah, Fohi — very like each other, truly: they have each but four letters, and only two of the four happen to differ. But, to strengthen the argument, Fohi, as the Chinese chronicle

asserts, had no father. Noah, it is true, had a father, as the European Bible tells us; but then, as this father was probably drowned in the flood, it is just the same as if he had no father at all: therefore Noah and Fohi are the same. Just after the flood the earth was covered with mud; if it was covered with mud it must have been incrustated mud; if it was incrustated it was clothed with verdure; this was a fine, unembarrassed road for Noah to fly from his wicked children: he therefore did fly from them, and took a journey of two thousand miles for his own amusement; therefore Noah and Fohi are the same.

Another sect of literati — for they all pass among the vulgar for very great scholars — assert that the Chinese came neither from the colony of Sesostris nor from Noah, but are descended from Magog, Meshec, and Tubal, and therefore neither Sesostris, nor Noah, nor Fohi are the same.

It is thus, my friend, that indolence assumes the airs of wisdom, and, while it tosses the cup-and-ball with infantine folly, desires the world to look on, and calls the stupid pastime philosophy and learning. Adieu.

THE MANNER IN WHICH SOME PHILOSOPHERS MAKE ARTIFICIAL MISERY

THE mind is ever ingenious in making its own

distress. The wandering beggar, who has none to protect, or feed, or to shelter him, fancies complete happiness in labor and a full meal; take him from rags and want, feed, clothe, and employ him, his wishes now rise one step above his station; he could be happy were he possessed of raiment, food, and ease. Suppose his wishes gratified even in these, his prospects widen as he ascends; he finds himself in affluence and tranquillity, indeed, but indolence soon breeds anxiety, and he desires not only to be freed from pain, but to be possessed of pleasure: pleasure is granted him, and this but opens his soul to ambition; and ambition will be sure to taint his future happiness either with jealousy, disappointment, or fatigue.¹

But of all the arts of distress found out by man for his own torment, perhaps that of philosophic misery is most truly ridiculous; a passion nowhere carried to so extravagant an excess as in the country where I now reside. It is not enough to engage all the compassion of a philosopher here that his own globe is harassed with wars, pestilence, or barbarity; he shall grieve for the inhabitants of the moon, if the situation of her imaginary mountains happens to alter; and dread the extinction of the sun, if the spots on his surface happen to increase. One should imagine that philosophy

¹ Goldsmith found this to be literally true in his own case.—
H. H. H.

was introduced to make men happy, but here it serves to make hundreds miserable.

My landlady, some days ago, brought me the diary of a philosopher of this desponding sort, who had lodged in the apartment before me. It contains the history of a life which seems to be one continued tissue of sorrow, apprehension, and distress. A single week will serve as a specimen of the whole:

“Monday. — In what a transient, decaying situation are we placed; and what various reasons does philosophy furnish to make mankind unhappy! A single grain of mustard shall continue to produce its similitude through numberless successions; yet what has been granted to this little seed has been denied to our planetary system: the mustard-seed is still unaltered, but the system is growing old, and must quickly fall to decay. How terrible will it be when the motions of all the planets have at last become so irregular as to need repairing; when the moon shall fall into frightful paroxysms of alteration; when the earth, deviating from its ancient track, and, with every other planet, forgetting its circular revolutions, shall become so eccentric that, unconfined by the laws of system, it shall fly off into boundless space, to knock against some distant world, or fall in upon the sun, either extinguishing his light or burnt up by his flames in a moment! Perhaps, while I write, this dreadful

change is begun. Shield me from universal ruin! Yet idiot man laughs, sings, and rejoices, in the very face of the sun, and seems no way touched with his situation.

"Tuesday. — Went to bed in great distress; awaked, and was comforted by considering that this change was to happen at some indefinite time; and therefore, like death, the thoughts of it might easily be borne. But there is a revolution, a fixed, determined revolution, which must certainly come to pass; yet which, by good-fortune, I shall never feel, except in my posterity. The obliquity of the equator with the ecliptic is now twenty minutes less than when it was observed two thousand years ago by Piteas. If this be the case, in six thousand the obliquity will be still less by a whole degree. This being supposed, it is evident that our earth, as Louville has clearly proved, has a motion by which the climates must necessarily change place, and in the space of about one million of years England shall actually travel to the Antarctic pole. I shudder at the change! How shall our unhappy grand-children endure the hideous climate? A million of years will soon be accomplished — they are but a moment when compared to eternity; then shall our charming country, as I may say, in a moment of time resemble the hideous wilderness of Nova Zembla.

"Wednesday. — To-night, by my calculation,

the long predicted comet is to make its first appearance. Heavens! what terrors are impending over our little dim speck of earth! Dreadful visitation! Are we to be scorched in its fires, or only smothered in the vapor of its tail? That is the question. Thoughtless mortals! go build houses, plant orchards, purchase estates, for to-morrow you die. But what if the comet should not come? That would be equally fatal. Comets are servants which periodically return to supply the sun with fuel. If our sun, therefore, should be disappointed of the expected supply, and all his fuel be in the mean time burnt out, he must expire like an exhausted taper. What a miserable situation must our earth be in without his enlivening ray! Have we not seen several neighboring suns entirely disappear? Has not a fixed star, near the tail of the Ram, lately been quite extinguished?

“Thursday. — The comet has not yet appeared. I am sorry for it: first, sorry because my calculation is false; secondly, sorry lest the sun should want fuel; thirdly, sorry lest the wits should laugh at our erroneous predictions; and fourthly, sorry because, if it appears to-night, it must necessarily come within the sphere of the earth’s attraction; and Heaven help the unhappy country on which it happens to fall!

“Friday. — Our whole society have been out, all eager in search of the comet. We have seen

not less than sixteen comets in different parts of the heavens. However, we are unanimously resolved to fix upon one only to be the comet expected. That near Virgo wants nothing but a tail to fit it out completely for terrestrial admiration.

“Saturday. — The moon is, I find, at her old pranks. Her appulses, librations, and other irregularities indeed amaze me. My daughter, too, is this morning gone off with a grenadier. No way surprising! I was never able to give her a relish for wisdom. She ever promised to be a mere expletive in the creation. But the moon, the moon gives me real uneasiness; I fondly fancied I had fixed her. I had thought her constant, and constant only to me; but every night discovers her infidelity, and proves me a desolate and abandoned lover.” Adieu.

THE CONDOLENCE AND CONGRATULATION UPON THE DEATH OF THE LATE KING

THE manner of grieving for our departed friends in China is very different from that of Europe. The mourning color of Europe is black, that of China white. When a parent or relation dies here, for they seldom mourn for friends, it is only clapping on a suit of sables, grimacing in it for a few days, and all, soon forgotten, goes on as before; not a single creature missing the deceased, except, perhaps, a favorite house-keeper or a favorite cat.

On the contrary, with us in China it is a very serious affair. The piety with which I have seen you behave on one of these occasions should never be forgotten. I remember it was upon the death of thy grandmother's maiden sister. The coffin was exposed in the principal hall in public view; before it were placed the figures of eunuchs, horses, tortoises, and other animals, in attitudes of grief and respect. The more distant relations of the old lady, and I among the number, came to pay our compliments of condolence, and to salute the deceased after the manner of our country. We had scarce presented our wax-candles and perfumes, and given the howl of departure,¹ when, crawling on his belly from under a curtain, out came the reverend Fum Hoam himself, in all the dismal solemnity of distress. Your looks were set for sorrow; your clothing consisted of a hempen bag tied round the neck with a string. For two long months did this mourning continue. By night you lay stretched on a single mat, and sat on the stool of discontent by day. Pious man! who could thus set an example of sorrow and decorum to our country. Pious country! where, if we do not grieve at

¹ "When a parent or elder relation among the Chinese dies, the lineal descendants, clothed in white cloth, with bandages of the same color round their heads, sit weeping round the corpse on the ground, the women keeping up a dismal howl, after the manner of the Irish." — DAVIS'S *Chinese*.

the departure of our friends for their sakes, at least we are taught to regret them for our own.

All is very different here; amazement all! What sort of people am I got among? Fum, thou son of Fo, what sort of people am I got among? No crawling round the coffin, no dressing up in hempen bags, no lying on mats, or sitting on stools! Gentlemen here shall put on first mourning with as sprightly an air as if preparing for a birth-night; and widows shall actually dress for another husband in their weeds for the former. The best jest of all is, that our merry mourners clap bits of muslin on their sleeves, and these are called weepers. Weeping muslin! alas, alas, very sorrowful truly! These weepers, then, it seems, are to bear the whole burden of the distress.

But I have had the strongest instance of this contrast, this tragi-comical behavior in distress, upon a recent occasion. Their king,¹ whose departure though sudden was not unexpected, died after a reign of many years. His age and uncertain state of health served, in some measure, to diminish the sorrow of his subjects; and their expectations from his successors seemed to balance their minds between uneasiness and satisfaction. But how ought they to have behaved on such an occasion! Surely, they ought rather to have endeavored

¹ George the Second, who died October 25, 1760, in the seventy-seventh year of his age, and the thirty-fourth of his reign.

to testify their gratitude to their deceased friend than to proclaim their hopes of the future! Sure, even the successor must suppose their love to wear the face of adulation, which so quickly changed the object! However, the very same day on which the old king died they made rejoicing for the new.

For my part, I have no conception of this new manner of mourning and rejoicing in a breath, of being merry and sad, of mixing a funeral procession with a jig and a bonfire. At least it would have been just that they who flattered the king while living for virtues which he had not, should lament him dead for those he really had.

In this universal cause for national distress, as I had no interest myself, so it is but natural to suppose I felt no real affliction. "In all the losses of our friends," says a European philosopher, "we first consider how much our own welfare is affected by their departure, and moderate our real grief just in the same proportion."¹ Now, as I had neither received nor expected to receive favors from kings or their flatterers — as I had no acquaintance in particular with the late monarch — as I know that the place of a king is soon supplied — and, as the Chinese proverb has it,

¹ "In all distresses of our friends,
We first consult our private ends;
While Nature, kindly bent to ease us,
Points out some circumstance to please us."

SWIFT, *On his own Death*.

that though the world may sometimes want cobblers to mend their shoes, there is no danger of its wanting emperors to rule their kingdoms — from such considerations I could bear the loss of a king with the most philosophic resignation. However, I thought it my duty at least to appear sorrowful, to put on a melancholy aspect, or to set my face by that of the people.

The first company I came among after the news became general was a set of jolly companions, who were drinking prosperity to the ensuing reign. I entered the room with looks of despair, and even expected applause for the superlative misery of my countenance. Instead of that, I was universally condemned by the company for a grimacing son of a whore, and desired to take away my penitential phiz to some other quarter. I now corrected my former mistake, and with the most sprightly air imaginable entered a company where they were talking over the ceremonies of the approaching funeral. Here I sat for some time with an air of pert vivacity, when one of the chief mourners, immediately observing my good-humor, desired me, if I pleased, to go and grin somewhere else; they wanted no disaffected scoundrels there. Leaving this company, therefore, I was resolved to assume a look perfectly neutral, and have ever since been studying the fashionable air — something between jest and earnest; a complete virginity of

face, uncontaminated with the smallest symptom of meaning.

But though grief be a very slight affair here, the mourning, my friend, is a very important concern. When an emperor dies in China, the whole expense of the solemnities is defrayed from the royal coffers. When the great die here, mandarins are ready enough to order mourning, but I do not see that they are so ready to pay for it. If they send me down from court the gray undress-frock, or the black coat without pocket-holes, I am willing enough to comply with their commands, and wear both; but, by the head of Confucius! to be obliged to wear black, and buy it into the bargain, is more than my tranquillity of temper can bear. What! order me to wear mourning before they know whether I can buy it or no! Fum, thou son of Fo, what sort of people am I got among? where being out of black is a certain symptom of poverty; where those who have miserable faces cannot have mourning, and those who have mourning will not wear a miserable face!

ALMOST EVERY SUBJECT OF LITERATURE
HAS BEEN ALREADY EXHAUSTED

It is usual for the booksellers here, when a book has given universal pleasure upon one subject, to bring out several more upon the same plan; which are sure to have purchasers and readers, from

that desire which all men have to view a pleasing object on every side. The first performance serves rather to awaken than satisfy attention; and when that is once moved the slightest effort serves to continue its progression: the merit of the first diffuses a light sufficient to illuminate the succeeding efforts; and no other subject can be relished till that is exhausted. A stupid work, coming thus immediately in the train of an applauded performance, weans the mind from the object of its pleasure; and resembles the sponge thrust into the mouth of a discharged culverin, in order to adapt it for a new explosion.

This manner, however, of drawing off a subject, or a peculiar mode of writing, to the dregs, effectually precludes a revival of that subject or manner for some time for the future: the sated reader turns from it with a kind of literary nausea, and though the titles of books are the part of them most read, yet he has scarce perseverance enough to wade through the title-page.

Of this number I own myself one. I am now grown callous to several subjects and different kinds of composition. Whether such originally pleased I will not take upon me to determine; but at present I spurn a new book merely upon seeing its name in an advertisement; nor have the smallest curiosity to look beyond the first leaf, even though in the second the author promises to ex-

hibit his own face "neatly engraved on copper."

I am become a perfect epicure in reading; plain beef or solid mutton will never do. I am for a Chinese dish of bears' claws and birds' nests. I am for sauce strong with asafœtida or fuming with garlic. For this reason, there are a hundred very wise, learned, virtuous, well-intended productions that have no charms for me. Thus, for the soul of me, I could never find courage nor grace enough to wade above two pages deep into "Thoughts upon God and Nature," or "Thoughts upon Providence," or "Thoughts upon Free Grace," or indeed into "Thoughts" upon anything at all. I can no longer meditate with "Meditations for Every Day in the Year." "Essays upon Divers Subjects" cannot allure me, though never so interesting; and as for Funeral Sermons, or even Thanksgiving Sermons, I can neither weep with the one nor rejoice with the other.

But it is chiefly in gentle poetry where I seldom look farther than the title. The truth is, I take up books to be told something new; but here, as it is now managed, the reader is told nothing. He opens the book, and there finds very good words truly, and much exactness of rhyme, but no information. A parcel of gaudy images pass on before his imagination like the figures in a dream; but curiosity, induction, reason, and the whole train of affections are fast asleep. The *jucunda et*

idonea vitae, those sallies which mend the heart while they amuse the fancy, are quite forgotten; so that a reader who would take up some modern applauded performances of this kind must, in order to be pleased, first leave his good-sense behind him, take for his recompense and guide bloated and compound epithet, and dwell on paintings, just, indeed, because labored with minute exactness.

If we examine, however, our internal sensations, we shall find ourselves but little pleased with such labored vanities; we shall find that our applause rather proceeds from a kind of contagion caught up from others, and which we contribute to diffuse, than from what we privately feel. There are some subjects of which almost all the world perceive the futility, yet all combine in imposing them upon each other as worthy of praise. But chiefly this imposition obtains in literature, where men publicly condemn what they relish with rapture in private, and approve abroad what has given them disgust at home. The truth is, we deliver those criticisms in public which are supposed to be best calculated, not to do justice to the author, but to impress others with an opinion of our superior discernment.

But let works of this kind, which have already come off with such applause, enjoy it all. It is neither my wish to diminish, as I was never considerable enough to add to, their fame. But, for

the future, I fear there are many poems of which I shall find spirits to read but the title. In the first place, all odes upon winter, or summer, or autumn; in short, all odes, epodes, and monodies whatsoever, shall hereafter be deemed too polite, classical, obscure, and refined to be read, and entirely above human comprehension. Pastorals are pretty enough — for those that like them; but to me *Thyrsis* is one of the most insipid fellows I ever conversed with; and, as for *Corydon*, I do not choose his company. Elegies and epistles are very fine to those to whom they are addressed; and as for epic poems, I am generally able to discover the whole plan in reading the two first pages.

Tragedies, however, as they are now made, are good, instructive, moral sermons enough; and it would be a fault not to be pleased with good things. There I learn several great truths; as, that it is impossible to see into the ways of futurity; that punishment always attends the villain; that love is the fond soother of the human breast; that we should not resist Heaven's will, for in resisting Heaven's will Heaven's will is resisted; with several other sentiments equally new, delicate, and striking. Every new tragedy, therefore, I shall go to see; for reflections of this nature make a tolerable harmony, when mixed up with a proper quantity of drum, trumpet, thunder, lightning, or the scene-shifter's whistle. Adieu.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE COURTS OF JUSTICE IN WESTMINSTER HALL

I HAD some intentions lately of going to visit Bedlam, the place where those who go mad are confined. I went to wait upon the man in black to be my conductor ; but I found him preparing to go to Westminster Hall, where the English hold their courts of justice. It gave me some surprise to find my friend engaged in a lawsuit, but more so when he informed me that it had been depending for several years. "How is it possible," cried I, "for a man who knows the world to go to law? I am well acquainted with the courts of justice in China ; they resemble rat-traps every one of them — nothing more easy than to get in, but to get out again is attended with some difficulty, and more cunning than rats are generally found to possess."

"Faith," replied my friend, "I should not have gone to law but that I was assured of success before I began ; things were presented to me in so alluring a light that I thought by barely declaring myself a candidate for the prize I had nothing more to do than to enjoy the fruits of the victory. Thus have I been upon the eve of an imaginary triumph every term these ten years — have travelled forward with victory ever in my view, but ever out of reach ; however, at present, I fancy we have hampered our antagonist in such a manner that, without some unforeseen demur, we shall

not fail this day to lay him fairly on his back."

"If things be so situated," said I, "I do not care if I attend you to the courts, and partake in the pleasure of your success. But prithee," continued I, as we set forward, "what reasons have you to think an affair at last concluded which has given you so many former disappointments?"

"My lawyer tells me," returned he, "that I have Salkeld and Ventris strong in my favor, and that there are no less than fifteen cases in point."

"I understand," said I: "those are two of your judges who have already declared their opinions."

"Pardon me," replied my friend, "Salkeld and Ventris are lawyers who, some hundreds of years ago, gave their opinions on cases similar to mine; these opinions which make for me my lawyer is to cite, and those opinions which look another way are cited by the lawyer employed by my antagonist; as I observed, I have Salkeld and Ventris for me, he has Coke and Hale for him; and he that has most opinions is most likely to carry his cause."

"But where is the necessity," cried I, "of prolonging a suit by citing the opinions and reports of others, since the same good-sense which determined lawyers in former ages may serve to guide your judges at this day? They at that time gave their opinions only from the light of reason; your judges have the same light at present to direct them; let me even add, a greater, as in former

ages there were many prejudices from which the present is happily free. If arguing from authorities be exploded from every other branch of learning, why should it be particularly adhered to in this? I plainly foresee how such a method of investigation must embarrass every suit, and even perplex the student; ceremonies will be multiplied, formalities must increase, and more time will thus be spent in learning the arts of litigation than in the discovery of right."

"I see," cries my friend, "that you are for a speedy administration of justice; but all the world will grant that the more time that is taken up in considering any subject the better it will be understood. Besides, it is the boast of an Englishman that his property is secure, and all the world will grant that a deliberate administration of justice is the best way to secure his property. Why have we so many lawyers but to secure our property? why so many formalities but to secure our property? Not less than one hundred thousand families live in opulence, elegance, and ease merely by securing our property."

"To embarrass justice," returned I, "by a multiplicity of laws, or to hazard it by the confidence in our judges, are, I grant, the opposite rocks on which legislative wisdom has ever split: in one case the client resembles that emperor who is said to have been suffocated with the bedclothes which

were only designed to keep him warm; in the other to that town which let the enemy take possession of its walls, in order to show the world how little they depended upon aught but courage for safety. But, bless me! what numbers do I see here, all in black — how is it possible that half this multitude find employment?"

"Nothing so easily conceived," returned my companion; "they live by watching each other. For instance, the catchpole watches the man in debt, the attorney watches the catchpole, the counsellor watches the attorney, the solicitor the counsellor, and all find sufficient employment."

"I conceive you," interrupted I; "they watch each other, but it is the client that pays them all for watching. It puts me in mind of a Chinese fable, which is entitled 'Five Animals at a Meal.'

"A grasshopper filled with dew was merrily singing under a shade; a whangam, that eats grasshoppers, had marked it for its prey, and was just stretching forth to devour it; a serpent, that had for a long time fed on whangams, was coiled up to fasten on the whangam; a yellow bird was just upon the wing to dart upon the serpent; a hawk had just stooped from above to seize the yellow bird; all were intent on their prey, and unmindful of their danger; so the whangam ate the grasshopper, the serpent ate the whangam, the yellow bird the serpent, and the hawk the yellow

bird; when, sousing from on high, a vulture gobbled up the hawk, grasshopper, whangam, and all in a moment."

I had scarce finished my fable when the lawyer came to inform my friend that his cause was put off till another term; that money was wanted to retain, and that all the world was of opinion that the very next hearing would bring him off victorious.¹ "If so, then," cries my friend, "I believe it will be my wisest way to continue the cause for another term; and, in the mean time, my friend here and I will go and see Bedlam." Adieu.

A VISIT FROM A LITTLE BEAU

I LATELY received a visit from a little beau, who I found had assumed a new flow of spirits with a new suit of clothes. Our discourse happened to turn upon the different treatment of the fair sex here and in Asia, with the influence of beauty in refining our manners and improving our conversation.

I soon perceived he was strongly prejudiced in favor of the Asiatic method of treating the sex, and that it was impossible to persuade him but

¹ It would seem that human nature—and the courts of justice—are ever and unalterably the same. Which reminds us of Byron's words, "The lapse of ages changes all things—time—language—the earth—the bounds of the sea—the stars of the sky, and everything about, around, and underneath man, except man himself; who has always been and always will be an unlucky rascal."

that a man was happier who had four wives at his command than he who had only one. "It is true," cries he, "your men of fashion in the East are slaves, and under some terror of having their throats squeezed by a bowstring; but what then? they can find ample consolation in a seraglio; they make, indeed, an indifferent figure in conversation abroad, but then they have a seraglio to console them at home. I am told they have no balls, drums, nor operas, but then they have got a seraglio; they may be deprived of wine and French cookery, but they have a seraglio. A seraglio, a seraglio, my dear creature, wipes off every inconvenience in the world.

"Besides, I am told, your Asiatic beauties are the most convenient women alive, for they have no souls: positively there is nothing in nature I should like so much as ladies without souls; soul here is the utter ruin of half the sex. A girl of eighteen shall have soul enough to spend a hundred pounds in the turning of a trump. Her mother shall have soul enough to ride a sweep-stake match at a horse-race; her maiden aunt shall have soul enough to purchase the furniture of a whole toy-shop; and others shall have soul enough to behave as if they had no souls at all."

"With respect to the soul," interrupted I, "the Asiatics are much kinder to the fair sex than you imagine; instead of one soul, Fohi, the idol of

China, gives every woman three; the Bramins give them fifteen; and even Mohammed himself nowhere excludes the sex from paradise. Abulfeda reports that an old woman one day importuning him to know what she ought to do in order to gain paradise: 'My good lady,' answered the prophet, 'old women never get there.' 'What! never get to paradise!' returned the matron, in a fury. 'Never,' says he, 'for they always grow young by the way.'

"No, sir," continued I, "the men of Asia behave with more deference to the sex than you seem to imagine. As you of Europe say grace upon sitting down to dinner, so it is the custom in China to say grace when a man goes to bed to his wife."

"And may I die," returned my companion, "but it is a very pretty ceremony; for, seriously, sir, I see no reason why a man should not be as grateful in one situation as in the other. Upon honor, I always find myself much more disposed to gratitude on the couch of a fine woman than upon sitting down to a sirloin of beef."

"Another ceremony," said I, resuming the conversation, "in favor of the sex among us is, the bride's being allowed after marriage her three days of freedom. During this interval a thousand extravagances are practised by either sex. The lady is placed upon the nuptial bed, and numberless monkey tricks are played round to divert her. One gentleman smells her perfumed handkerchief,

another attempts to untie her garters, a third pulls off her shoe to play hunt the slipper, another pretends to be an idiot, and endeavors to raise a laugh by grimacing; in the mean time the glass goes briskly about, till ladies, gentlemen, wife, husband, and all are mixed together in one inundation of arrack punch."

"Strike me dumb, deaf, and blind," cried my companion, "but that's very pretty! There's some sense in your Chinese ladies' condescensions; but among us you shall scarcely find one of the whole sex that shall hold her good-humor for three days together. No later than yesterday I happened to say some civil things to a citizen's wife of my acquaintance, not because I loved, but because I had charity; and, what do you think was the tender creature's reply? Only that she detested my pig-tail wig, high-heeled shoes, and sallow complexion! That is all — nothing more! Yes, by the heavens, though she was more ugly than an unpainted actress, I found her more insolent than a thorough-bred woman of quality!"

He was proceeding in this wild manner, when his invective was interrupted by the man in black, who entered the apartment, introducing his niece, a young lady of exquisite beauty. Her very appearance was sufficient to silence the severest satirist of the sex; easy without pride and free without impudence, she seemed capable of supply-

ing every sense with pleasure; her looks, her conversation were natural and unconstrained; she had neither been taught to languish nor ogle, to laugh without a jest or sigh without sorrow. I found that she had just returned from abroad, and had been conversant in the manners of the world. Curiosity prompted me to ask several questions, but she declined them all. I own I never found myself so strongly prejudiced in favor of apparent merit before; and could willingly have prolonged our conversation, but the company after some time withdrew. Just, however, before the little beau took his leave he called me aside, and requested I would change him a twenty-pound bill; which, as I was incapable of doing, he was contented with borrowing half a crown. Adieu.

THE PEOPLE MUST BE CONTENTED TO BE
GUIDED BY THOSE WHOM THEY HAVE
APPOINTED TO GOVERN

IN every society some men are born to teach and others to receive instruction; some to work, and others to enjoy in idleness the fruits of their industry; some to govern, and others to obey. Every people, how free so ever, must be contented to give up part of their liberty and judgment to those who govern, in exchange for their hopes of security; and the motives which first influenced their choice in the election of their governors should

ever be weighed against the succeeding apparent inconsistencies of their conduct. All cannot be rulers, and men are generally best governed by a few. In making way through the intricacies of business the smallest obstacles are apt to retard the execution of what is to be planned by a multiplicity of counsels; the judgment of one alone being always fittest for winding through the labyrinths of intrigue and the obstructions of disappointment. A serpent which as the fable observes, is furnished with one head and many tails, is much more capable of subsistence and expedition than another which is furnished with but one tail and many heads.

Obvious as these truths are, the people of this country seem insensible of their force. Not satisfied with the advantages of internal peace and opulence, they still murmur at their governors and interfere in the execution of their designs, as if they wanted to be something more than happy. But as the Europeans instruct by argument, and the Asiatics mostly by narration, were I to address them, I should convey my sentiments in the following story:

“Takupi had long been Prime-minister of Tiptala, a fertile country that stretches along the western confines of China. During his administration whatever advantages could be derived from arts, learning, and commerce were seen to bless

the people; nor were the necessary precautions of providing for the security of the state forgotten. It often happens, however, that when men are possessed of all they want, they then begin to find torment from imaginary afflictions, and lessen their present enjoyments by foreboding that those enjoyments are to have an end. The people now, therefore, endeavored to find out grievances; and, after some search, actually began to think themselves aggrieved. A petition against the enormities of Takupi was carried to the throne in due form; and the queen who governed the country, willing to satisfy her subjects, appointed a day in which his accusers should be heard and the minister should stand upon his defence.

“The day being arrived, and the minister brought before the tribunal, a carrier, who supplied the city with fish, appeared among the number of his accusers. He exclaimed that it was the custom, time immemorial, for carriers to bring their fish upon a horse in a hamper; which, being placed on one side, and balanced by a stone on the other, was thus conveyed with ease and safety; but that the prisoner, moved either by a spirit of innovation, or perhaps bribed by the hamper-makers, had obliged all carriers to use the stone no longer, but balance one hamper with another — an order entirely repugnant to the customs of all antiquity, and those of the kingdom of Tipartala in particular.

"The carrier finished, and the whole court shook their heads at the innovating minister, when a second witness appeared. He was inspector of the city buildings, and accused the disgraced favorite of having given orders for the demolition of an ancient ruin, which obstructed the passage through one of the principal streets. He observed that such buildings were noble monuments of barbarous antiquity — contributed finely to show how little their ancestors understood of architecture; and for that reason such monuments should be held sacred, and suffered gradually to decay.

"The last witness now appeared. This was a widow, who had laudably attempted to burn herself upon her husband's funeral pile. But the innovating minister had prevented the execution of her design, and was insensible to her tears, protestations, and entreaties.

"The queen could have pardoned the two former offences; but this last was considered as so gross an injury to the sex, and so directly contrary to all the customs of antiquity, that it called for immediate justice. 'What!' cried the queen, 'not suffer a woman to burn herself when she thinks proper? The sex are to be very prettily tutored, no doubt, if they must be restrained from entertaining their female friends now and then with a fried wife or roasted acquaintance. I sentence the criminal to be banished my presence

forever for his injurious treatment of the sex.'

"Takupi had been hitherto silent, and spoke only to show the sincerity of his resignation. 'Great queen,' cried he, 'I acknowledge my crime, and since I am to be banished, I beg it may be to some ruined town or desolate village in the country I have governed. I shall find some pleasure in improving the soil, and bringing back a spirit of industry among the inhabitants.' His request appearing reasonable, it was immediately complied with, and a courtier had orders to fix upon a place of banishment answering the minister's description. After some months' search, however, the inquiry proved fruitless; neither a desolate village nor a ruined town was found in the whole kingdom. 'Alas,' said Takupi then to the queen, 'how can that country be ill-governed which has neither a desolate village nor a ruined town in it?' The queen perceived the justice of his expostulation, and the minister was received into more than former favor."

THE PASSION FOR GAMING AMONG LADIES

THE ladies here are by no means such ardent gamesters as the women of Asia. In this respect I must do the English justice; for I love to praise where applause is justly merited. Nothing is more common in China than to see two women of fashion continue gaming till one has won all the oth-

er's clothes and stripped her quite naked; the winner thus marching off in a double suit of finery, and the loser shrinking behind in the primitive simplicity of nature.

No doubt you remember when Shang, our maiden aunt, played with a sharper. First her money went; then her trinkets were produced; her clothes followed, piece by piece, soon after; when she had thus played herself quite naked, being a woman of spirit, and willing to pursue her own, she staked her teeth. Fortune was against her even here, and her teeth followed her clothes; at last she played for her left eye, and, oh hard fate! this, too, she lost; however, she had the consolation of biting the sharper, for he never perceived that it was made of glass till it became his own.

How happy, my friend, are the English ladies, who never rise to such an inordinance of passion! Though the sex here are naturally fond of games of chance, and are taught to manage games of skill from their infancy, yet they never pursue ill-fortune with such amazing intrepidity. Indeed, I may entirely acquit them of ever playing — I mean, playing for their eyes or their teeth.

It is true, they often stake their fortune, their beauty, health, and reputation at a gaming-table. It even sometimes happens that they play their husbands into a jail; yet still they preserve a decorum unknown to our wives and daughters of

China. I have been present at a rout in this country, where a woman of fashion, after losing her money, has sat writhing in all the agonies of bad-luck; and yet, after all, never once attempted to strip a single petticoat, or cover the board, as her last stake, with her head-clothes.

However, though I praise their moderation at play, I must not conceal their assiduity. In China our women, except upon some great days, are never permitted to finger a dice-box; but here every day seems to be a festival; and night itself, which gives others rest, only serves to increase the female gamester's industry. I have been told of an old lady in the country who, being given over by the physicians, played with the curate of her parish to pass the time away; having won all his money, she next proposed playing for her funeral charges; the proposal was accepted, but unfortunately, the lady expired just as she had taken in her game.

There are some passions which, though differently pursued, are attended with equal consequences in every country. Here they game with more perseverance, there with greater fury; here they strip their families, there they strip themselves naked. A lady in China who indulges a passion for gaming often becomes a drunkard; and by flourishing a dice-box in one hand she generally comes to brandish a dram-cup in the other.

Far be it from me to say there are any who drink drams in England; but it is natural to suppose that when a lady has lost everything else but her honor, she will be apt to toss that into the bargain; and, grown insensible to nicer feelings, behave like the Spaniard who, when all his money was gone, endeavored to borrow more by offering to pawn his whiskers. Adieu.

SOME PROJECTS FOR INTRODUCING ASIATIC
EMPLOYMENTS INTO THE COURTS
OF ENGLAND

THERE are numberless employments in the courts of the Eastern monarchs utterly unpractised and unknown in Europe. They have no such officers, for instance, as the emperor's ear-tickler or tooth-picker; they have never introduced at the courts the mandarin appointed to bear the royal tobacco-box, or the grave director of the imperial exercitations in the seraglio. Yet I am surprised that the English have imitated us in none of these particulars, as they are generally pleased with everything that comes from China, and excessively fond of creating new and useless employments. They have filled their houses with our furniture, their public gardens with our fireworks, and their very ponds with our fish. Our courtiers, my friend, are the fish and the furniture they should have imported; our courtiers would fill up the neces-

sary ceremonies of a court better than those of Europe; would be contented with receiving large salaries for doing little — whereas, some of this country are at present discontented, though they receive large salaries for doing nothing.

I lately, therefore, had thoughts of publishing a proposal here for the admission of some new Eastern offices and titles into their court-register. As I consider myself in the light of a cosmopolite, I find as much satisfaction in scheming for the countries in which I happen to reside as for that in which I was born.

The finest apartments in the palace of Pegu are frequently infested with rats. These the religion of the country strictly forbids the people to kill. In such circumstances, therefore, they are obliged to have recourse to some great man of the court who is willing to free the royal apartments even at the hazard of his salvation. After a weak monarch's reign the quantity of court vermin in every corner of the palace is surprising; but a prudent king and a vigilant officer soon drive them from their sanctuaries behind the mats and tapestry, and effectually free the court. Such an officer in England would, in my opinion, be serviceable at this juncture; for if, as I am told, the palace be old, much vermin must undoubtedly have taken refuge behind the wainscot and hangings. A minister should therefore be invested with the title

and dignities of court vermin-killer; he should have full power either to banish, take, poison, or destroy them, with enchantments, traps, ferrets, or ratsbane. He might be permitted to brandish his besom without remorse, and brush down every part of the furniture, without sparing a single cobweb, however sacred by long prescription. I communicated this proposal some days ago in a company of the first distinction, and enjoying the most honorable offices of the state. Among the number were the inspector of great Britain, Mr. Henriquez, the director of the ministry; Ben. Victor, the treasurer; John Lockman, the secretary, and the conductor of the *Imperial Magazine*. They all acquiesced in the utility of my proposal, but were apprehensive it might meet with some obstruction from court upholsterers and chambermaids, who would object to it from the demolition of the furniture, and the dangerous use of ferrets and ratsbane.

My next proposal is rather more general than the former, and might probably meet with less opposition. Though no people in the world flatter each other more than the English, I know none who understand the art less, and flatter with such little refinement. Their panegyric, like a Tartar feast, is indeed served up with profusion, but their cookery is insupportable. A client here shall dress up a fricassee for his patron that shall of-

find an ordinary nose before it enters the room. A town shall send up their address to a great minister which shall prove at once a satire on the minister and themselves. If the favorite of the day sits, or stands, or sleeps, there are poets to put it into verse, and priests to preach it in the pulpit. In order, therefore, to free both those who praise and those who are praised from a duty probably disagreeable to both, I would constitute professed flatterers here, as in several courts in India. These are appointed in the courts of their princes to instruct the people where to exclaim with admiration, and where to lay an emphasis of praise. But an officer of this kind is always in waiting when the emperor converses in a familiar manner among his rajahs and other nobility. At every sentence, when the monarch pauses and smiles at what he has been saying, the karamat-man, as this officer is called, is to take it for granted that his majesty has said a good thing; upon which he cries out, "Karamat! karamat! a miracle! a miracle!" and throws up his hands and his eyes in ecstasy. This is echoed by the courtiers around, while the emperor sits all this time in sullen satisfaction, enjoying the triumph of his joke, or studying a new repartee.

I would have such an officer placed at every great man's table in England.¹ By frequent prac-

¹ Goldsmith, in early life, was once thus employed, but he said

tice he might soon become a perfect master of the art, and in time would turn out pleasing to his patron, no way troublesome to himself, and might prevent the nauseous attempts of many more ignorant pretenders. The clergy here, I am convinced, would relish this proposal. It would provide places for several of them. And, indeed, by some of their late productions, many appeared to have qualified themselves as candidates for this office already.

But my last proposal I take to be of the utmost importance. Our neighbor the Empress of Russia has, you may remember, instituted an order of female knighthood. The Empress of Germany has also instituted another; the Chinese have had such an order time immemorial. I am amazed the English have never come into such an institution. When I consider what kind of men are made knights here, it appears strange that they have never conferred this honor upon women. They make cheese-mongers and pastry-cooks knights; then why not their wives? They have called up tallow-chandlers to maintain the hardy profession of chivalry and arms; then why not their wives? Haberdashers are sworn, as I suppose all knights must be sworn, "never to fly in time of mellay or battle, to maintain and uphold the noble estate of

he gave up the position, on discovering that his employer was a greater dunce than he was. — H. H. H.

chivalry, with horse harnishe and other knightlye habiliments." Haberdashers, I say, are sworn to all this; then why not their wives? Certain I am, their wives understand fighting and feats of "mellay and battle" better than they; and as for "knightlye horse and harnishe," it is probable both knew nothing more than the harness of a one-horse chaise.

No, no, my friend; instead of conferring any order upon the husbands, I would knight their wives. However, the state should not be troubled with a new institution upon this occasion. Some ancient exploded order might be revived which would furnish both a motto and a name; the ladies might be permitted to choose for themselves. There are, for instance, the obsolete orders of the Dragon in Germany, of the Rue in Scotland, and the Porcupine in France, all well-sounding names, and very applicable to my intended female institution. Adieu.

ON THE DIFFERENT SECTS IN ENGLAND

RELIGIOUS sects in England are far more numerous than in China. Every man who has interest enough to hire a conventicle here may set up for himself, and sell off a new religion. The sellers of the newest pattern at present give extreme good bargains, and let their disciples have a great deal of confidence for very little money.

Their shops are much frequented, and their customers every day increasing; for people are naturally fond of going to paradise at as small expense as possible.

Yet you must not conceive this modern sect as differing in opinion from those of the established religion. Difference of opinion, indeed, formerly divided their sectaries, and sometimes drew their armies to the field: white gowns and black mantles, flapped hats and cross pocket-holes were once the obvious causes of quarrel; men then had some reason for fighting, they knew what they fought about; but at present they are arrived at such refinement in religion-making that they have actually formed a new sect without a new opinion; they quarrel for opinions they both equally defend; they hate each other, and that is all the difference between them.

But though their principles are the same, their practice is somewhat different. Those of the established religion laugh when they are pleased, and their groans are seldom extorted but by pain or danger. The new sect, on the contrary, weep for their amusement, and use little music except a chorus of sighs and groans, or tunes that are made to imitate groaning. Laughter is their aversion; lovers court each other from the Lamentations; the bridegroom approaches the nuptial couch in sorrowful solemnity, and the bride looks

more dismal than an undertaker's shop. Dancing round the room is with them running in a direct line to the devil; and as for gaming, though but in jest, they would sooner play with a rattlesnake's tail than finger a dice-box.

By this time you perceive that I am describing a sect of enthusiasts, and you have already compared them with the Fakirs, Bramins, and Talapoins of the East. Among these, you know, are generations that have been never known to smile, and voluntary affliction makes up all the merit they can boast of. Enthusiasms in every country produce the same effects; stick the Fakir with pins, or confine the Bramin to a vermin hospital; spread the Talapoin on the ground, or load the sectary's brow with contrition: those worshippers who discard the light of reason are ever gloomy; their fears increase in proportion to their ignorance, as men are continually under apprehensions who walk in darkness.

Yet there is still a stronger reason for the enthusiast's being an enemy to laughter; namely, his being himself so proper an object of ridicule. It is remarkable that the propagators of false doctrines have ever been averse to mirth, and always begin by recommending gravity when they intended to disseminate imposture. Fohi, the idol of China, is represented as having never laughed; Zoroaster, the leader of the Bramins, is said to have laughed

but twice — upon his coming into the world, and upon his leaving it; and Mohammed himself, though a lover of pleasure, was a professed opposer of gayety. Upon a certain occasion, telling his followers that they would all appear naked at the resurrection, his favorite wife represented such an assembly as immodest and unbecoming. "Foolish woman!" cried the grave prophet, "though the whole assembly be naked, on that day they shall have forgotten to laugh." Men like him opposed ridicule, because they knew it to be a most formidable antagonist, and preached up gravity, to conceal their own want of importance.

Ridicule has ever been the most powerful enemy of enthusiasm, and properly the only antagonist that can be opposed to it with success. Persecution only serves to propagate new religions; they acquire fresh vigor beneath the executioner and the axe; and, like some vivacious insects, multiply by dissection. It is also impossible to combat enthusiasm with reason, for though it makes a show of resistance, it soon eludes the pressure; refers you to distinctions not to be understood, and feelings which it cannot explain. A man who would endeavor to fix an enthusiast by argument might as well attempt to spread quicksilver with his fingers. The only way to conquer a visionary is to despise him; the stake, the fagot, and the disputing doctor in some measure ennoble the opinions

they are brought to oppose: they are harmless against innovating pride; contempt alone is truly dreadful. Hunters generally know the most vulnerable part of the beasts they pursue, by the care which every animal takes to defend the side which is weakest; on what side the enthusiast is most vulnerable may be known by the care which he takes in the beginning to work his disciples into gravity, and guard them against the power of ridicule.

When Philip the Second was King of Spain there was a contest in Salamanca between two orders of friars for superiority. The legend of one side contained more extraordinary miracles, but the legend of the other was reckoned most authentic. They reviled each other, as is usual in disputes of divinity; the people were divided into factions, and a civil war appeared unavoidable. In order to prevent such an imminent calamity, the combatants were prevailed upon to submit their legends to the fiery trial, and that which came forth untouched by the fire was to have the victory, and to be honored with a double share of reverence. Whenever the people flock to see a miracle, it is a hundred to one but that they see a miracle; incredible, therefore, were the numbers that were gathered round upon this occasion. The friars on each side approached, and confidently threw their respective legends into the flames, when lo! to the

utter disappointment of all the assembly, instead of a miracle, both legends were consumed. Nothing but thus turning both parties into contempt could have prevented the effusion of blood. The people now laughed at their former folly, and wondered why they fell out. Adieu.

AN ELECTION DESCRIBED

THE English are at present employed in celebrating a feast which becomes general every seventh year; the Parliament of the nation being then dissolved,¹ and another appointed to be chosen. This solemnity falls infinitely short of our feast of the lanterns in magnificence and splendor; it is also surpassed by others of the East in unanimity and pure devotion; but no festival in the world can compare with it for eating. Their eating, indeed, amazes me; had I five hundred heads, and were each head furnished with brains, yet would they all be insufficient to compute the number of cows, pigs, geese, and turkeys which upon this occasion die for the good of their country.

To say the truth, eating seems to make a grand ingredient in all English parties of zeal, business, or amusement. When a church is to be built or a hospital to be endowed, the directors assemble, and instead of consulting upon it, they eat upon it, by which means the business goes forward with

¹ On the 20th of March, 1761, on the death of George II.

success. When the poor are to be relieved, the officers appointed to dole out public charity assemble and eat upon it; nor has it ever been known that they filled the bellies of the poor till they had previously satisfied their own. But in the election of magistrates the people seem to exceed all bounds; the merits of a candidate are often measured by the number of his treats; his constituents assemble, eat upon him, and lend their applause, not to his integrity or sense, but to the quantities of his beef and brandy.

And yet I could forgive this people their plentiful meals on this occasion, as it is extremely natural for every man to eat a great deal when he gets it for nothing; but what amazes me is, that all this good living no way contributes to improve their good-humor. On the contrary, they seem to lose their temper as they lose their appetites; every morsel they swallow and every glass they pour down serves to increase their animosity. Many an honest man, before as harmless as a tame rabbit, when loaded with a single election dinner has become more dangerous than a charged culverin. Upon one of these occasions I have actually seen a bloody-minded man-milliner sally forth at the head of a mob, determined to face a desperate pastry-cook, who was general of the opposite party.

But you must not suppose they are without a

pretext for thus beating each other. On the contrary, no man here is so uncivilized as to beat his neighbor without producing very sufficient reasons. One candidate, for instance, treats with gin, a spirit of their own manufacture; another always drinks brandy imported from abroad. Brandy is a wholesome liquor, gin a liquor wholly their own. This, then furnishes an obvious cause of quarrel—whether it be most reasonable to get drunk with gin or get drunk with brandy? The mob meet upon the debate, fight themselves sober, and then draw off to get drunk again, and charge for another encounter. So that the English may now properly be said to be engaged in war; since, while they are subduing their enemies abroad, they are breaking each other's heads at home.

I lately made an excursion to a neighboring village, in order to be a spectator of the ceremonies practised upon this occasion. I left town in company with three fiddlers, nine dozen of hams, and a corporation poet, which were designed as re-enforcements to the gin-drinking party. We entered the town with a very good face; the fiddlers, no way intimidated by the enemy, kept handling their arms up the principal street. By this prudent manœuvre they took peaceable possession of their head-quarters, amid the shouts of multitudes, who seemed perfectly rejoiced at hearing their music, but above all at

the happy contemplation of seeing their bacon.

I must own I could not avoid being pleased to see all ranks of people on this occasion levelled into an equality, and the poor, in some measure, enjoying the primitive privileges of nature. If there was any distinction shown, the lowest of the people seemed to receive it from the rich. I could perceive a cobbler with a levee at his door, and a haberdasher giving audience from behind his counter. But my reflections were soon interrupted by a mob, who demanded whether I was for the distillery or the brewery? As these were terms with which I was totally unacquainted, I chose at first to be silent; however, I know not what might have been the consequence of my reserve, had not the attention of the mob been called off to a skirmish between a brandy-drinker's cow and a gin-drinker's mastiff, which turned out, greatly to the satisfaction of the mob, in favor of the mastiff.

The spectacle, which afforded high entertainment, was at last ended by the appearance of one of the candidates, who came to harangue the mob; he made a very pathetic speech upon the late excessive importation of foreign drams, and the downfall of the distillery. I could see some of the audience shed tears. He was accompanied in his procession by Mrs. Deputy and Mrs. Mayoress. Mrs. Deputy was not in the least in liquor; and as for Mrs. Mayoress, one of the spectators as-

sured me, in my ear, that — she was a very fine woman before she had the small-pox.

Mixing with the crowd, I was now conducted to the hall where the magistrates are chosen; but what tongue can describe this scene of confusion! the whole crowd seemed equally inspired with anger, jealousy, politics, patriotism, and punch. I remarked one figure that was carried up by two men upon the occasion. I at first began to pity his infirmities as natural, but soon found the fellow so drunk that he could not stand; another made his appearance to give his vote, but though he could stand, he actually lost the use of his tongue and remained silent; a third, who, though excessively drunk, could both stand and speak, being asked the candidate's name for whom he voted, could be prevailed upon to make no other answer but "Tobacco and brandy."

In short, an election hall seems to be a theatre where every passion is seen without disguise, a school where fools may readily become worse, and where philosophers may gather wisdom. Adieu.

A CITY NIGHT-PIECE

THE clock just struck two, the expiring taper rises and sinks in the socket, the watchman forgets the hour in slumber, the laborious and the happy are at rest, and nothing wakes but meditation, guilt, revelry, and despair. The drunkard

once more fills the destroying bowl, the robber walks his midnight round, and the suicide lifts his guilty arm against his own sacred person.

Let me no longer waste the night over the page of antiquity or the sallies of contemporary genius, but pursue the solitary walk, where Vanity, ever changing, but a few hours past walked before me, where she kept up the pageant, and now, like a froward child, seems hushed with her own importunities.

What a gloom hangs all around! The dying lamp feebly emits a yellow gleam; no sound is heard but of the chiming clock or the distant watch-dog. All the bustle of human pride is forgotten; an hour like this may well display the emptiness of human vanity.

There will come a time when this temporary solitude may be made continual, and the city itself, like its inhabitants, fade away, and leave a desert in its room.

What cities, as great as this, have once triumphed in existence! had their victories as great, joy as just and as unbounded, and with short-sighted presumption promised themselves immortality! Posterity can hardly trace the situation of some; the sorrowful traveller wanders over the awful ruins of others; and, as he beholds, he learns wisdom, and feels the transience of every sublunary possession.

"Here," he cries, "stood their citadel, now grown over with weeds; there, their senate-house, but now the haunt of every noxious reptile; temples and theatres stood here, now only an undistinguished heap of ruin. They are fallen; for luxury and avarice first made them feeble. The rewards of the state were conferred on amusing and not on useful members of society. Their riches and opulence invited the invaders, who, though at first repulsed, returned again, conquered by perseverance, and at last swept the defendants into undistinguished destruction."

How few appear in those streets which, but some few hours ago, were crowded! and those who appear now no longer wear their daily mask, nor attempt to hide their lewdness or their misery.

But who are those who make the streets their couch, and find a short repose from wretchedness at the doors of the opulent? These are strangers, wanderers, and orphans, whose distresses are too great even for pity.¹ Their wretchedness rather excites horror than pity. Some are without the covering even of rags, and others emaciated with disease: the world has disclaimed them; society turns its back upon their distress, and has given them up to nakedness and hunger. These poor shivering females have once seen happier days

¹ This was Goldsmith's unhappy lot when he first arrived in London.

and been flattered into beauty. They have been prostituted to the gay, luxurious villain, and are now turned out to meet the severity of winter. Perhaps, now lying at the doors of their betrayers, they sue to wretches whose hearts are insensible, or debauches who may curse but will not relieve them.¹

Why, why was I born a man, and yet see the sufferings of wretches I cannot relieve! Poor houseless creatures! the world will give you reproaches, but will not give you relief. The slightest misfortunes of the great, the most imaginary uneasiness of the rich, are aggravated with all the power of eloquence, and held up to engage our attention and sympathetic sorrow. The poor weep unheeded, persecuted by every subordinate species of tyranny; and every law, which gives others security, becomes an enemy to them.

Why was this heart of mine formed with so much sensibility! or why was not my fortune adapted to its impulse! Tenderness, without a capacity of relieving, only makes the man who

¹

“Ah, turn thine eyes

Where the poor houseless shivering female lies.

She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,

Has wept at tales of innocence distrest;

Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,

Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn;

Now lost to all; her friends, her virtue fled,

Near her betrayer's door she lays her head.”

— *The Deserted Village*

feels it more wretched than the object which sues for assistance. Adieu.

THE CONCLUSION

AFTER a variety of disappointments, my wishes are at length fully satisfied. My son, so long expected, is arrived; at once, by his presence, banishing my anxiety and opening a new scene of unexpected pleasure. His improvements in mind and person have far surpassed even the sanguine expectations of a father. I left him a boy, but he is returned a man: pleasing in his person, hardened by travel, and polished by adversity. His disappointment in love, however, had infused an air of melancholy into his conversation, which seemed at intervals to interrupt our mutual satisfaction. I expected that this could find a cure only from time; but Fortune, as if willing to load us with her favors, has in a moment repaid every uneasiness with rapture.

Two days after his arrival, the man in black, with his beautiful niece, came to congratulate us upon this pleasing occasion; but, guess our surprise when my friend's lovely kinswoman was found to be the very captive my son had rescued from Persia, and who had been wrecked on the Wolga, and was carried by the Russian peasants to the port of Archangel. Were I to hold the pen of a novelist I might be prolix in describing their

feelings at so unexpected an interview; but you may conceive their joy without my assistance; words were unable to express their transports; then how can words describe it?

When two young persons are sincerely enamored of each other, nothing can give me such pleasure as seeing them married: whether I know the parties or not, I am happy at thus binding one link more in the universal chain. Nature has in some measure formed me for a match-maker, and given me a soul to sympathize with every mode of human felicity. I instantly, therefore, consulted the man in black, whether we might not crown their mutual wishes by marriage: his soul seems formed of similar materials with mine — he instantly gave his consent, and the next day was appointed for the solemnization of their nuptials.

All the acquaintances which I had made since my arrival were present at this gay solemnity. The little beau was constituted master of the ceremonies, and his wife, Mrs. Tibbs, conducted the entertainment with proper decorum. The man in black and the pawnbroker's widow were very sprightly and tender upon this occasion. The widow was dressed up under the direction of Mrs. Tibbs; and as for her lover, his face was set off by the assistance of a pig-tail wig, which was lent by the little beau, to fit him for making love with proper formality. The whole company easily per-

ceived that it would be a double wedding before all was over ; and indeed my friend and the widow seemed to make no secret of their passion : he even called me aside, in order to know my candid opinion, whether I did not think him a little too old to be married. "As for my own part," continued he, "I know I am going to play the fool, but all my friends will praise my wisdom, and produce me as the very pattern of discretion to others."

At dinner everything seemed to run on with good-humor, harmony, and satisfaction. Every creature in company thought themselves pretty, and every jest was laughed at. The man in black sat next his mistress, helped her plate, chimed her glass ; and, jogging her knees and her elbow, he whispered something arch in her ear, on which she patted his cheek : never was antiquated passion so playful, so harmless, and amusing as between this reverend couple.

The second course was now called for, and, among a variety of other dishes, a fine turkey was placed before the widow. The Europeans, you know, carve as they eat ; my friend, therefore, begged his mistress to help him to a part of the turkey. The widow, pleased with an opportunity of showing her skill in carving (an art upon which it seems she piqued herself) began to cut it up, by first taking off the leg.

"Madam," cried my friend, "if I might be per-

mitted to advise, I would begin by cutting off the wing, and then the leg will come off more easily."

"Sir," replies the widow, "give me leave to understand cutting up a fowl; I always begin with the leg."

"Yes, madam," replies the lover, "but if the wing be the most convenient manner, I would begin with the wing."

"Sir," interrupts the lady, "when you have fowls of your own, begin with the wing, if you please; but give me leave to take off the leg: I hope I am not to be taught at this time of day!"

"Madam," interrupts he, "we are never too old to be instructed."

"*Old*, sir!" interrupts the other, "who is old, sir? When I die of age, I know of some that will quake for fear: if the leg does not come off, take the turkey to yourself."

"Madam," replied the man in black, "I don't care a farthing whether the leg or the wing comes off; if you are for the leg first, why, you shall have the argument, even though it be as I say."

"As for the matter of that," cries the widow, "I don't care a fig whether you are for the leg off or on; and, friend, for the future keep your distance!"

"Oh," replied the other, "that is easily done; it is only removing to the other end of the table; and so, madam, your most obedient, humble servant."

Thus was this courtship of an age destroyed in one moment; for this dialogue effectually broke off the match that had been just concluded between this respectable couple. The smallest accidents disappoint the most important treaties; however, though it in some measure interrupted the general satisfaction, it no ways lessened the happiness of the youthful couple; and by the young lady's looks I could perceive she was not entirely displeased with this interruption.

In a few hours the whole transaction seemed entirely forgotten, and we have all since enjoyed those satisfactions which result from a consciousness of making each other happy. My son and his fair partner are fixed here for life; the man in black has given them up a small estate in the country, which, added to what I was able to bestow, will be capable of supplying all the real, but not the fictitious, demands of happiness. As for myself, the world being but one city to me, I do not much care in which of the streets I happen to reside. I shall therefore spend the remainder of my days in examining the manners of different countries, and have prevailed upon the man in black to be my companion. "They must often change," says Confucius, "who would be constant in happiness or wisdom." Adieu.

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